

***Robert Iannapolo, Cadence Magazine, USA, jan-feb-mar 2011***

**Michael Jaeger KEROUAC's CD „Outdoors“**

Saxophonist Michael Jaeger formed his ensemble Kerouac in 2005. The personnel has remained consistent and they released a recording in 2006 for Unit Records called Erfindungen. Judging by the performance of the eight pieces on their most recent release, *Outdoors*, these are four players who know each other well. And they are comfortable enough as a group to invite two guests to the proceedings: American saxophonist Greg Osby and guitarist Philipp Schaufelberger. Interestingly both come across as integral members of the ensemble rather than add-ons. Initially the disc starts out as a solid contemporary session with straightforward themes and improvisational strategies. Jaeger's tenor saxophone has an appealing gruffness that gives the music a slightly rough-hewn quality. But with the abstract "Schwarzes Eis" things take a turn towards more open territory. "Daha" lurches forward in a staggering motion, with pianist Membrez tapping out a Morse code-like rhythm that provides the rhythmic starting point for the soloists. Membrez stands out on this track which, as it opens up, has him offering commentary on the soloist with artful phrases and fragments. During the opening minutes of "Flexible" the rhythm section pushes things along in a manner reminiscent of the classic Holland/Altschul rhythm section style of Free ballad playing. The track goes through several tempo shifts before its conclusion. The title track is a minor epic at 12 and half minutes and has a lot of written material. There are some especially effective contrapuntal passages between Jaeger and Osby. "Frei Funf" is the one actual Free piece and shows the group able to make a coherent statement in an abstract space. It's this deft blend of inside and outside playing that makes *Outdoors* a success.

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