



jazz

To Speak

EQ

Vorticity

★★★★☆

MELBOURNE-BASED jazz-fusion group EQ has achieved acclaim during its eight-year history in live performances and with its debut, self-titled album in 2008. It's a standard trio of guitar, bass and drums by Chris Bieniek, Kit Riley and Chris Broomhead respectively, but with added synthesiser programming, plus occasional guest pianist Daniel Gassin. Unlike some jazz-fusion, this music is not overly heavy, tending more towards thoughtful, figurative ideas and expressive rather than drop-forge drumming, making it likely to appeal more to the jazz — rather than the rock — end of the spectrum. There are references to Pat Metheny in Bieniek's playing, particularly in *Shreddersaurus Rex* where a guitar solo rips out at finger-shredding speed. One of several slower tracks, *Natural High*, adds Gassin's keys to the mix in flowing ascending, often 16th note passages to introduce a more chordal guitar at first, but moving on to fast single note work as the bass and drums build their own lines below. *Cheek* opens with a quite pretty melodic line from guitar and bass in unison and continues with a leisurely guitar solo and lazy, sunny afternoon keys. Similarly the title track has a romantic atmosphere, opening with dreamy piano roaming against a guitar and synth textured wash, followed by a more galvanising guitar solo and a swinging one from the piano, imbued with a sprinkling of classical influences. The title track, and the longest at nearly eight minutes, concludes interestingly in a lengthy series of piano and drum exchanges of three repeated staccato chords and Broomhead's busily contrasting percussion.

John McBeath