

# Elan Mehler

The After Suite

★★★★☆

(Brownswood) £10.76



Brooklyn-based jazz pianist Elan Mehler is that rare thing, a US musician who sounds European. He was discovered while playing a Swiss residency, but his style seems to have moved further north and west. Singer Becca Stevens has a passing resemblance to Norwegian artist Solveig Slettahjell, with a pleasingly cool, detached approach. She contributes wordless vocals to the title track and The 54th Leap, reminiscent of British pioneers Mike Taylor, Norma Winstone and Michael Garrick, if less harmonically ambitious. A distinctive, riff-based approach to arrangement mixes interlocking keyboards with bass, drums and Jeremy Viner's brooding sax. There's one cover: a slow-motion version of Gillian Welch's I Dream a Highway. Two tracks featuring rising singer-songwriter Adam McBride give the album a shift in mood: introspective but commercial. **John L Walters**