

NEW ISSUES

STEVE COLSON THE UNTARNISHED DREAM

SILVER SPHINX 12403

CIRCUMSTANTIAL / DIGRESSION
/ IQUA'S WALTZ / TRIUMPH OF
THE OUTCASTS, COMING* /
MAYBE / PARALLEL UNIVERSE /
THE UNTARNISHED DREAM* /
WARRIORS / AND IT WAS SET IN
IVORY*. 65:37.*

Adegoke Steve Colson, p;
Reggie Workman, b;
Andrew Cyrille, d; Iqua Colson,
vcl*. No date or location listed.



John Allred by John Herr

“Twisted,” “My Heart Goes Out” is fine walking Jazz-blues, and “Bag Lady” has a sexy Latin groove. At the more experimental end “Night” and “Trampled Heart” are atmospheric raga rock pieces with chugging bass and chiming guitars while “Healing Blue” supports Landis’ airy semi-talked vocals with a flinty blues-funk rhythm. Landis’ voice really shows its elasticity here while Matle is ridiculously versatile in his playing and has a really fine rhythm section in John Lindberg and Dennis Sheridan behind him. This one is impressive in its ambition.

Jerome Wilson

An unfairly overlooked alum of the AACM, Colson’s extremely supple and mature piano playing is a delight to listen to, comfortable with its sentimental tendencies, direct without compromising intelligence, and layered with enough reminders of Free music dues to please almost any listener. After a too brief period of visibility when he recorded with Black Saint/Soul Note, Colson’s been off the radar a bit of late. This self-released disc is an emphatic reminder of his powers, as well as being a cracking trio (with occasional vocals) session. The lilt of the opener is sort of like the kind of tune Don Pullen used to write, but with a more limber pianism at work, filled with rhythmic subtleties that are complemented, contrasted, redirected, or underscored by the sublime Workman and Cyrille. Iqua Colson’s colorful alto superficially recalls Nina Simone’s timbre in places, but she has a more formal delivery and a propensity to hold notes with a wide, sustained vibrato. She fits in well with the nice, often impressionistic trio work, perhaps nowhere better than on the closing track, which is solemn but tinged with hope, featuring abundant use of small percussion instruments to accompany the recitation. But I found myself mostly compelled by the superb trio interaction and creativity. They are poised and graceful on the loosely swinging “Waltz,” expansive on “Triumph of the Outcasts” (with very spacious piano from Colson and a superb, tonally rich drum solo from Cyrille), and on “Maybe” they seem to take in so many different styles it’s almost dizzying, including mild dissonance, a hint of stride, some Bud Powell voicings, the whole emerging as a fully formed song (you can also study Colson’s approach in detail on the solo piece “Warriors.” Finely tuned music, always spacious and flowing. A really nice surprise.

Jason Bivins