

his considerable legacy, while Smoker's stirring flights again lead me to scratch my head in amazement at his TDWR status. Lane demonstrates his versatility on the last half of the track with his splendid arco work, in essence suspending time, while the horns elegantly produce the spiritual concluding lines. Lane demonstrates his athleticism during the opening sections of "It Happened To Us Naturally" with rousing, thrusting lines that give way to a rush of the theme, as well as the thundering drums from Altschul. "The Band Is" is the concluding track containing Altschul's march time and Tchicai's humorous, stream of consciousness wordplay. While this may have been designed to let off the steam from the previous hour's worth of intensely gratifying music, I question whether it should have been included (either that or perhaps I no longer have a sense of humor).

Based on the foregoing, I would be amazed if this disc failed to appear on many top ten lists this year. Though the compositions present somewhat structured themes, the music here is hardly that, as the improvisations make this disc compelling. Those lucky enough to see this group on their short tour in support of this album will understand how this disc captures the spirit of this formation, as well as announcing Lane as a talent to watch.

Jay Collins

1) CHARENE DAWN, DARK ANGEL, SIROCCO JAZZ 1020.

Reasons / Poetry Man / Love Is / All Or Nothing At All / Smile / Here And Now / Dark Angel / Kiss / Goodbye Pork Pie Hat. 55:24.

Dawn, vcl; Bob Berg, ts, ss; Paul Bollenback, g; Avishai Cohen, b; Henry Hey, p, kybd; Billy Kilson, d; Joe Locke, vib; Gregoire Maret, hca; Ben Kono, Eng hn, flt; Thomas Mariott, fgh; Mike Fahn, tbn. 6/25-26/02, New York, NY.

2) FUKUMI, LET ME INTRODUCE MYSELF, STELLA RECORDS 63215.

How Insensitive / Crazy He Calls It / I Get A Kick Out Of You / Violets For Your Furs / I Didn't Know What Time It Was / I Fall In Love Too Easily / Candy / Girl Talk / Thanks For The Memory / Silly Habits / The Very Thought Of You. 52:41.

Fukumi, vcl, arr; Rick DellaRatta, p, arr, vcl; Harvie S. (Swartz), b; Victor Jones, d; Paul Meyers, g; Dave Riekenberg, ts. 10/30-31, 11/3-4/01 New York, NY.

Two recording debuts, emanating from Bloomberg's duchy. Although Charene Dawn (1) has impressive McRae/Reeves type vocal chops, which, as the jewel case notes explain, she "garnered" in Chicago where she began her musical ascension, playing clarinet in her elementary school band. She has obviously come a long way baby, but - sadly - her debut CD boils down to boilerplate contempo-pop-soul-hit-cover, polished to Gavin Report smooth-Jazz gloss. "Reasons" is out of Minnie Ripperton, and "Poetry Man" is the same crashing bore it was when Phoebe "Snowed" us. The CD's most challenging track is "Hat," Mingus' homage to Lester Young, with Avishai Cohen

standing in for His Majesty, sounding just a bit too academically tight and tentative. Ms. Dawn's footing here is not all that secure, so while you might admire the intent of this bass/vocal duet, as well as the courage it took the two to walk such a high tight wire, the result isn't all that satisfying. Otherwise, the originals all sound as though carefully designed to fit the album's essential veneer. Ms. Dawn's own "Here" comes off like something Abbey Lincoln might have dreamt up on a particularly uninspired day, then discarded in a fit of pique. Locke's "Angel" is just as predictably dreary as the stereotypical TV series of the same name, to which it may or may not be making reference. "Kiss," presumably by the Pittsburgh Budways (singer, Maureen and pianist/composer, David) is cut to fit the same smooth Jazz specs. The standards, "Nothing" and "Smile" are finely minced, as well. Gregoire Maret's whining harmonica weaves through only "Love Is," while Ben Kono's gleaming horns are in decorative evidence on "Nothing," as are Tom Mariott's and Mike Fahn's on the title track. Make no mistake; the musicianship level for this project was just as high as the producers (Locke and Hey) required. Charene Dawn sings with admirable poise and professionalism.

The supportive audio engineering is a model of mixing board studio craftsmanship. The problem is that the music is hollow at its core.

It's reasonably certain that Ms. Fukumi (2) (her last or first name?) never played clarinet in Chicago, and I'm taking a wild guess when I place her, as a youngster, in the Japanese educational system. The nonexistent liner notes leave me alone with just the music and my deductive instincts. Yes, she could be native born, but there's something in her pronunciation of certain English words (most apparent, perhaps, during the breathless unreeling of the "Memory" lyrics) that refutes such an idea. Her CD is marginally more interesting and, therefore, more enjoyable than the one above, which is not to say that it's completely without its genuflections to predictability, but—on the whole—the repertoire is more varied and intriguing, and there is a considerably less prefabricated tilt to her session. Fukumi's voice is not as fulsome, perhaps, as Ms. Dawn's, but she has enough range and vocal agility to tell her stories convincingly. Cole Porter's "Kick" swings like nothing on the Dawn disc. I hear touches of Peggy, if not Billie, in "Crazy," but other than suggesting, perhaps, that she has listened to recordings of some of her predecessors, she certainly sounds like a singer who is content, if you'll excuse adaptation of an almost inexcusable (baseball) cliché, to sing within herself. Her reading of "Easily," with only pianist DellaRatta in support, is lovely because it's so patently unaffected and honest. "Violets" has the same sort of directness and lack of ambiguity, with—once again—sterling accompaniment from a very protective DellaRatta, and—this time—the full rhythm trio augmented by the Meyers' guitar. Victor Jones' restraint at the drum kit is delicious. The pianist joins in vocally on "Candy" and there is abundant

charm in the blend of the two voices. Janis Ian's "Silly" is an inspired choice of material. Among sing/songwriters of her ilk, Ian towers as a lyric genius. The song lends itself quite willingly to the Jazz lilt with which Fukumi and DellaRatta frame it. "Girl" is notable for some virtuosic bass playing by Harvie S. Fukumi's accent (calling Professor Higgins!!) crops up again on the concluding "Thought," which is a very sweet distillation of the Ray Noble standard, with only Paul Meyers' ravishing guitar filling out the song's ardent contours. The album's major failure is the opening bit of Jobinesque signifying, which never quite rises to the required samba soufflé level. Dave Riekenberg's stolid tenor declaims on "Didn't Know," but it's a cameo appearance and like most cameos hardly integral to the overall success or failure of the recital, which, in this case is the former, albeit modestly so.

Alan Bargebuhr

BRANFORD MARSALIS, FOOTSTEPS OF OUR FATHERS, MARSALIS MUSIC 11661-3301.

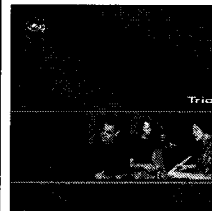
Giggin' / The Freedom Suite / A Love Supreme / Concorde. 67:34.
Marsalis, saxes; Joey Calderazzo, p; Eric Revis, b; Jeff Tain' Watts, d. 12/1-3/01, Bearsville, NY.

In inaugurating his own Marsalis Music label, Branford Marsalis, has opted to begin with some attention to the vast Jazz tradition. Naturally enough, he's picked three saxophonists to investi-

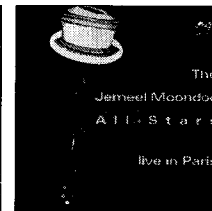
gate (plus a pianist). From the work of Coleman comes "Giggin'" from 1959's *Tomo*. *The Question*. That's followed by nothing less than a 23 minute exposition of Sonny Rollins' *ma opus* "The Freedom Suite," also recently recorded by the David S. Ware quartet. Then comes the entirety of John Coltrane's "A Love Supreme" minutes long, about the same timing as the Coltrane album. The band has a lot of fun with John Lewis' mid-Fifties composition "Concorde," which closes this unusually challenging program.

At first, I couldn't really see any reason anyone to record "A Love Supreme" from scratch; after all, Trane did that, and that's the records are for, right? But when Tain Watts is laying down the hippest polyrhythmic stew this side of an Elvin Jones gig, watch out. The feeling takes you over, carrying you and the music along and at least for a while, everything will seem right. You might say that Marsalis' rendition exceeded by his ambition, but he's aiming high, and coming awfully close in the process. While these renditions are not likely to make one ignore the original versions, they do offer some friendly competition.

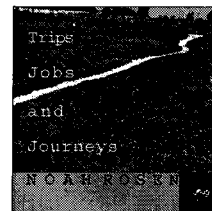
Marsalis is fluent, imaginative, and exciting on his array of saxophones. He manages to evoke the spirit of his role model without imitating their trademark sounds or his own individuality in the process. The final rendition of "The Freedom Suite" show him at his absolute best, with a ravishing tone on tenor



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