

CADENCE

JUNE 1996

STEVE MILLION, MILLION TO ONE, © PALMETTO 2014.

Eisenbleu / Blue Lizard / I'm Gettin' Sentimental Over You / No Pork #44 / Missing Page / Boo Boo's Birthday / Mood Point / When The Sun Comes Out / Duckbutter / Shadow Woman. 64:27.

Million, p; Randy Brecker, tpt, flgh; Chris Potter ts, ss; Michael Moore, b; Ron Vincent, d. 2/7-8/95, Stamford, CT.

If you spend any amount of time in Chicago Jazz clubs, chances are you'll eventually run into pianist Steve Million, a perennial presence on the robust Chicago Jazz scene. On *Million To One*, he's written some good tunes (and has chosen a couple of Jazz and pop standards that aren't overworked) and arrangements, and surrounded himself with good company to create a strong and enjoyable debut effort. Million is a capable, though not a spectacular, soloist who has the intelligence and good sense to play to his strengths; his solos aren't overlong, and he's generous in allotting space to his bandmates, who are consistently impressive. (Chris Potter's playing, in particular, possesses a maturity that places him far beyond some of his more highly-touted peers - all he needs now is a major label contract and a sponsorship from a fashion designer and he's all set for stardom!) But if Million doesn't blow you away with virtuosity, he very effectively makes this date his own through his fine visiting and arranging. The myth - that Jazz musicians can walk into a studio, split a few choruses each and a familiar standard with a minimum of preparation and it'll always sound good - is an attractive one, but dates like this make an equally convincing case for good original material and carefully considered arrangements even in a small group context. This is an exceptional straight-ahead date, easily recommended.

David Kuner