

RAPPORT

JUNE 1996

► Steve Millon

Million to One

Steve Millon, Randy Brecker,
Chris Potter, Michael Moore, Ron
Vincent. Palmetto Jazz. ★ ★ ★

HERE'S THE CHRISTMAS present you should have given yourself. It's the one in which all solos are nestled in rich tunes. Gift wrapped, if you will, with ribbons of sax and trumpet or flugel melodies. Set for delivery via bebop air.

It is one CD whose content glides so smoothly through so many styles you'll have difficulty trying to classify it. Only one pigeonhole does it justice: Delicious!

Million is not content to explore a bebop ensemble form that simply rehashes. His first cut, *Eisenbleu*, is a wonderful takeoff point showcase of his and the ensemble's abilities. It easily shifts through and blends traditional with fusion and Brazilian jazz rhythms and melodies—all this within one tune. It just can't get any better.

But it does!

Humor mixes with the moody and experimentally tinged *Blue Lizard*. This eclipses the opening tune, with ensemble instrumentalists gliding through slippery terrain.

Neither Bassman and Washington's *I'm Getting Sentimental Over You*, nor Monk's *Boo Boo's Birthday*, nor Arlen and Koehler's *When the Sun Comes Out* constitutes rehash.

Each benefits from alternately serious and light-hearted treatment which is as appropriate as it is spontaneous. Each complements Million's own flavorful, mindful writings, like entrees in a master chef's 10-course Christmas dinner.

All of the tunes have that authentic sound which is not born merely of the fact that recording was made on late '50s-period studio equipment. Reproduction was only a slight bit compressed as compared with today's best digital recordings. It's all very real, very present and very warm. D.F.