

JAZZ IMPROV

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Steve Million

POETIC NECESSITIES- Bluejazz Productions. 2002 *Into Onto; Coming On The Hudson; Rooster Dance; Necessaire; Tim Bim Bop; Dark Song; Second Hand Smokin; Where Are You?; Eat Me Baily; While We're Young.*

PERSONNEL: Dave Marr (bass), Tim Davis (drums), Steve Million (piano)

By Michael Mellia

You might have heard pianist Steve Million from his work with Randy Brecker, Dick Oatts, or, Michael More, but on *Poetic Necessities*, Million is presented in the trio context, along with Dave Marr on bass and Tim Davis on drums. The group has a very exciting modern sound, as evidenced by Million's playing on the few originals represented here. On "Into Onto" and "Tim Bim Bop," the playing is vaguely reminiscent of Chick Corea's up-tempo playing from the seminal *Now He Sings, Now He Sobs* recording of 1968. On these tracks Million is quite fond of Corea's left-hand quartal harmonies propelling impeccably timed, intricate right hand melodies. Million's other original "Eat Me Bailey" (the title of which is inspired by a character with tourette's syndrome from the novel *Motherless Brooklyn*) is a quasi-funk inspired piece complete with tightly arranged piano/bass unisons.

"Second Hand Smokin'" a tribute to Chicago's Green Mill jazz club, is the bread-and-butter blues arrangement of the set. Breakneck stops and arranged interludes frequently interrupt the choruses to build and release tension, but it's amazing how every time the band re-enters, the groove immediately picks up where it left off. Another highlight is a modal-sounding treatment of Thelonious Monk's "Coming on the Hudson" in 12/8. On this arrangement, drummer Tim Davis plays the toms using his bare hands while Marr anchors down Million's impressionistic wanderings.

Overall, the band plays exceptionally well together. Judging from the accuracy of the unisons, and the almost clairvoyant anticipations of breaks, it is obvious these musicians are intimately familiar with one another's playing. The entire album is performed well, but at times, it can be a little too perfect- as if the musicians are concentrating too much on the arrangements and not enough on having fun with the creative spirit of the music. At any rate, *Poetic Necessities* is an interesting listen and is recorded beautifully.