

CHICAGO TRIBUNE

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Recordings

Steve Millon: Thanks a Million
(Palmetto Records).

Though Chicago pianist Steve Millon has turned in impressive work in clubs and on record, his latest release represents a major leap forward for him.

Proving equally effective as bandleader, songwriter and arranger, Millon presides over a recording notable for the sleekness of its sound and the economy of its means. Other pianists, in other words, may enjoy preening before the microphone, but Millon prefers to create a cohesive, tightly compressed ensemble sound. When that ensemble is staffed by Randy Brecker, Chris Potter, Ron Vincent and Michael Moore, the results are striking, and not only because of the players' virtuosity. Throughout, it's the austere beauty of Millon's music that defines this recording. And when Millon steps forth for brief solos of his own, his playing is as terse and dramatic as everything else on this superb disc.

Howard Reich