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Cadence

THE REVIEW OF JAZZ & BLUES: CREATIVE IMPROVISED MUSIC

2) STEVE MILLION,
TRUTH IS,
PALMETTO 2042.

Right Place, Wrong Key / Truth Is / Terror of Toni Town / Fireflies / All the Things You Are / Perfectly Spaced / Shytown / Eiderdown / Nomadrigal / Blackwater / Ain't That Familiar / Gallops Gallop. 63-45
Million, p; Randy Brecker, tpt, flgh; Dick Oatts, ts, ss;
Michael Moore, b; Ron Vincent, d; Steve Cardenas, g. 1/
27 & 28/98, Brooklyn, NY.

Pianist Million also develops a full-ranging sound from his band on (2). He plays mostly original music with proper respect for the old masters embedded within the song structure. While the format is of the 'straight ahead' variety, Million infuses a lot of improvisatory diversity into his songs. Four of the selections feature the full sextet, Million goes solo on one song, and the balance of the numbers exclude either guitarist Cardenas or the two hornmen. As a pianist, Million is typically melodic. He does not use a heavy, percussive stroke, and his songs have a similar airy quality to them. When the full sextet is in play, Brecker is a main force on trumpet while Oatts handles the reed chores. The two take turns as soloists and also play at call and response while the rhythm section speeds along.

The selections that exclude Brecker and Oatts allow Million to be more expressive as the pianist. He improvises with a tinge of the classics underlying his style while gliding smoothly through the pieces at an easy gait. His homage to Monk on the opening line and closing number is respectful and complimentary. The use of guitarist Cardenas in the rhythm section is a nice touch that adds additional drive to the songs when he is on board. He is particularly effective on the very lovely "Nomadrigal" where he and Million dreamily wend their way through the lilting, classically rooted tune.

Million's recording has a pleasant sounding aspect to it. It is a non-disruptive venture for musicians playing quality music. Although seeking new frontiers is not in the game plan, the listening experience is enjoyable.

Frank Rubolino