



THE COOKERS

WARRIORS – Jazz Legacy Productions JLP 1001009. www.jazzlegacyproductions.com. *The Core; Spookarella; Close To You Alone; Priestess; Sweet Rita Suite part 2: Her Soul; Capra Black; Ladybug; U Phoria.*

PERSONNEL: Billy Harper, tenor saxophone; Eddie Henderson, trumpet; David Weiss, trumpet; Craig Handy, alto saxophone, flute; George Cables, piano; Cecil McBee, bass; Billy Hart, drums.

By Matt Marshall

Something of a throwback album, *Warriors* recalls the weighty, exhilarating post-bop sets of the 1960s. Appropriately, The Cookers, a group of all-star veterans, chose to kick off this record – their first as a unit – with the aptly titled Freddie Hubbard tune, “The Core.” It serves non only as the foundation for the album, but as a statement of the band’s core “beliefs” – a proclamation of who they are, where they come from, what they value and where they intend to direct their music.

A driving, hard-bop number, originally recorded by Hubbard on his final album with Art Blakey’s Jazz Messengers (*Free For All*, 1964), “The Core” is an excellent set-up piece. Trumpeter Eddie Henderson takes the first solo and has a field day running full-bore through the spacious field the tune spreads before him. Trumpeter David Weiss also solos on the piece (after tenor saxophonist Billy Harper has his go), making for expedient and intriguing comparison of the pair’s individual attacks – Henderson open and heavy, Weiss favoring a more constricted and pinched delivery. Pianist George Cables and drummer Billy Hart also get solo time, and the

band as a whole fires explosively on all cylinders.

The remaining seven numbers are compositions by three of the group’s members: two from Cables, two from Harper and three from bassist Cecil McBee. Harper’s “Priestess” is perhaps the standout of the set. It feeds off a melodic theme of acute familiarity, yet always eludes capture. The trio of soloists – Harper, Weiss and alto saxophonist Craig Handy – take the piece through exuberance, contemplation and peaceful resolution. McBee’s “Ladybug” also delights with Henderson’s muted trumpet and solo space for the bassist to improvise within his own composition. But then, the entire album delights, really. It’s old-school without in any way being old. And reminds that jazz, at its best, is both energetic and substantial.



PATTY CRONHEIM

DAYS LIKE THESE – Say So Records, PO Box 536, Penington NJ 08534. *Estando Aqui; Stella by Starlight; Don't Walk Anymore; Summertime; Superstition; Doggone Blues; I Feel the Heat; Made for Love; Days Like These; Bye Bye Blackbird.*

PERSONNEL: Patty Cronheim, vocals; Aaron Weiman, piano/Rhodes; Brian Glassman, bass; Corey Rawls, drums; Greg Wall and Audrey Welber, saxophones; Clifford Adams, trombone.

By Bob Gish

As vocalist (and composer of seven of the recorded tunes), Patty Cronheim has a way with words, and melody too, of course. She leads off in Spanish, establishing her fluency in that romance language, filled as it is with trills and tongue twists. “I am here,” she announces and so does her band, especially Clifford Adams with his trombone solo, the first of many, on the first cut. Cronheim and company are all here to play, no hesitations, no regrets. They get it on and so must listeners, get this CD on i-pod or stereo ASAP.

Stella by Sunlight follows suit, not as a burner so often associated with the tune’s nocturnal cousin, but as a ballad, with lyrics and tonality more conducive to beach front reveries and observations. Adams chimes in here too with muted trombone, underscoring the softness of the treatment. Stella in the morning light is hardly a fright – more a sight to behold with Ipanema sighs.

Another Cronheim composition like *Stella* is *I Feel the Heat*—a similar track, body heat and corresponding climatic zones, encapsulating the passions of enticements not always realized. Greg Wall’s soprano sax intensifies the trembling temptations of the lyrics. His solo is alluring in a kind of Pied Piper fashion adding to the exoticism and the eroticism of the tune.

Drummer Corey Rawls’ arrangement of Stevie Wonder’s *Superstition* is about as slickly jazzy as one can get, adding a new understanding of the potential of Wonder’s genius. You couldn’t hope for a more imaginative envisioning of the now classic tune.

Don't Work demonstrates Cronheim’s ways with the blues and the tones of a larger ensemble of instruments. She’s groovy, and, wouldn’t you guess it, so is Adams who pretty much monopolizes lead in solos on the early cuts (not to complain). Wall bellies up to the trough on this track and shoves Adams aside for a bit in a welcome wailing sax solo. Then Brain Glassman takes his turn showing its proficiency and bluesy prowess on the double bass. It all blends and builds back toward Cronheim’s final chorus with everyone chiming in behind her.

Ah, the Fender Rhodes, that incomparable invention so suitable to that Woodstock feel of the always moving, lazily loving *Summertime*, which as done here is the one indispensable rendering of the lot. This track could hold its own as a single release. Wall is again inspired and at one with the groovy ness of Aaron Weiman and his Rhodes. Glassman again asserts himself, not as a kind of tagalong but as an essential ingredient to the cause. Put them all together and it’ll all give you goose bumps of poignancy and pleasure.

The cut to match it, or almost so (if such choices must be made) as a kind of up-beat, scating book end, is *Bye Bye Blackbird*, that whining announcement of being misunderstood but determined to be wanted. Corey Rawls says as much with sticks and skin, so light the light for him and the sidemen Weiman and Glassman. Cronheim avoids any prima-donna sense of regarding the group as merely incidental to the vocals. Just chalk it up to a feeling of Team Cronheim, and do so boldly. So get out the sun block, the cooling beverage, and the fans, Cronheim *Days Like These* is hot, sultry stuff.



CYRUS CHESTNUT TRIO

JOURNEYS – JLP (Jazz Legacy Productions). www.jazzlegacyproductions.com. *Smitty's Joint; Lover; Eyes of an Angel; Little Jon; New Light; Journeys; The Flowers on the Terrace; Yu's Blues; In the Still Hours; Goliath*

PERSONNEL: Cyrus Chestnut, piano; Dezron Douglas, bass; Neal Smith, drums.

On his latest effort *Journeys*, Cyrus Chestnut does what he does best – he plays the piano. As a sideman, he’s played with everyone from the late greats (Dizzy Gillespie, Betty Carter, Freddie Hubbard) to his contemporaries (Donald Harrison, Jr., Terence Blanchard). His work as a sideman has given Chest-

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