

Albums

Tony Kofi and the Organisation: Point Blank – soulfully harmonised

Mike Hobart 2 HOURS AGO



Saxophonist [Tony Kofi](#)'s credits began with the UK's Jazz Warriors Big Band in the late 1980s. They now range from the brooding South African soundscapes of [Abdullah Ibrahim](#) to the ferocious aesthetics of The World Saxophone Quartet and [Ornette Coleman](#).

In contrast, the saxophonist's own-name albums present him confidently inventing new lines over the theme-and-variation structures of Blue Note era modern jazz. Kofi's melodic precision and dynamic energy are consistent throughout the saxophone range. But here he concentrates on the throaty warmth of the baritone sax and applies his full-toned fluency to a set of modernist covers in the company of a rootsy organ trio.

The album opens with Duke Pearson's snappy, be-bop inflected "Minor League", taken at a pace. Sax and guitar are soulfully harmonised on the theme, and the solos flow confidently over the changes of a minor key blues. The blues return later in the set, first at a medium lope on "L S Blues", then as a boogaloo on "Cisco" and finally in waltz time on Wes Montgomery's "Full House". And there is an up-tempo Horace Silver bossa nova, "Bossallegro".

Elsewhere, Woody Shaw's "Moontrane" takes the band into modal territory, McCoy Tyner's "Search for Peace" is a heart-rending ballad and "Ready and Able" a set-closing steamer. There is one show tune, Henry Mancini's jaunty "Theme from Mr Lucky".

Kofi and his band give the solos a depth and detail that avoids repetition, and make the most of the harmonies that lie underneath. The leader is a commanding presence throughout, preaching the blues, holding notes for maximum impact and always in control when rampaging at speed. Guitarist Simon Fernsby doubles up as foil and rhythmic support and organist Peter Whittaker delivers sophisticated soul alongside sturdy bass pedal lines that lock into Peter Carter's drums.

The programme is balanced, each theme sounds fresh and the musicians play from the heart. They are reading from a familiar script, and they read it well.

★★★★☆

'Point Blank' is released by The Last Music Co

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