

Janice Borla Group
Promises To Burn

TALL GRASS 8281
★★★★★

Janice Borla is a warm-toned, swinging jazz singer with passion in her delivery. More than most, she has the ability to make her vocals function as an instrument within the band. The downside is that she likes to scat, and she does so profusely. Borla has a pliant, medium-sized alto voice, and she uses Bill Evans' tight-cornering "Funkallero" to set the tone here. Guitarist John McLean's spare chords add to the high-wire aspect of the song, while Scott Robinson's liquid tenor ends in the altissimo register. The band takes no prisoners but also sounds like it's having fun. Borla produced the album, and her choice of material ranges from the low-sizzle bossa nova "You Don't Know What Love Is" to the ECM-like "Silver Hollow" (with an ethereal wordless vocal) to the bright and complex Tristano workout "Lennie's Pennies." Her colleagues support her, but also grant her space. Robinson's tenor can match her luxuriousness on "Some Other Time" or run a neck-and-neck steeplechase on "Pennies." Art Davis' blues-soaked flugelhorn and John McLean's like-minded guitar perfectly illustrate the juncture between jazz and blues on "Midnight Voyage." Borla pulls off a hat trick on this disc: She's on equal footing with the instrumentalists during her musical scat exchanges, but remains the focal point with stellar performances like "You Don't Know What Love Is." Each is an impressive musical feat.

—Kirk Silsbee

Promises To Burn: Funkallero; Midnight Voyage; Some Other Time; Lennie's Pennies; Silver Hollow; You Don't Know What Love Is; RunFerYerLife; If You Could See Me Now. (45:33)

Personnel: Janice Borla, vocals; Art Davis, trumpet, flugelhorn; Scott Robinson, soprano, tenor saxophones; John McLean, guitar; Bob Bowman, bass; Jack Mouse, drums.

Ordering info: janiceborla.com



Freddie Bryant
Dreamscape: Solo, Duo, Trio

GJK SOUNDS 0011
★★★★★

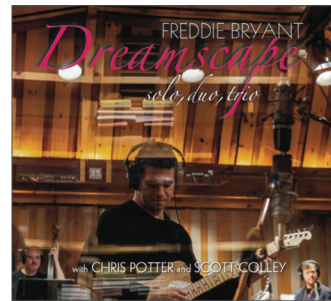
Guitarist Freddie Bryant's *Dreamscape: Solo, Duo, Trio* is a cup of tea: It's comforting, straightforward, tastes good and goes down easy. The lengthy Bryant original "Songs"—which features bassist Scott Colley and Chris Potter on bass clarinet—begins with a slow, insistent bass line and some dirty blues licks. And then, near the end, a powerful guitar-and-bass duet occurs, and Bryant lets go. For about a minute, we get dark, purposeful soloing. Another Bryant composition, "Vignette #2," falls in the same category. A somewhat disjointed piece arranged for bass and electric guitar, "Vignette #2" finds the musicians presenting something truly unified. They're focused and really working together. The album-ending traditional "I'm Going To Tell God All Of My Troubles," which does not feature Bryant, Colley or Potter, also deserves mention. Earlier in the album, the same song is done by the duo of Bryant on nylon-string guitar and Potter on bass clarinet. But the final track is a live performance from Bryant's parents, recorded at New York's Lincoln Center in 1974. Carroll Hollister's piano is sparse and soulful, and you can hear the life-and-times in Beatrice Rippy's stirring soprano. The track is close to being a tearjerker; Bryant clearly has music in his genes.

—Brad Farberman

Dreamscape: Solo, Duo, Trio: Dreamscape; Ask Me Now; Vignette #1; Vignette #2; Goodbye Pork Pie Hat; Songs; Estate; Secret Love; I'm Going To Tell God All Of My Troubles; Everyday Is The End And The Beginning Of Life Beautiful ...; Serenade; Watermelon Man; Fantasia On A Theme By Charlie Haden: For Turiya; Silence; I'm Going To Tell God All Of My Troubles. (75:00)

Personnel: Freddie Bryant, guitars (1–14); Chris Potter, bass clarinet (6, 9), tenor saxophone (10), soprano saxophone (1); Scott Colley, bass (1, 3, 4, 6, 10); Beatrice Rippy, soprano (15); Carroll Hollister, piano (15).

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