

# CD REVIEW

## Summer Days and Dreamy Nights

### Anne Burnell

**Anne Burnell** – Vocals  
**Henry Johnson** – Guitar  
**Mark Burnell** – Piano  
**Mike Logan** – Keyboards, piano  
**Corey Wilkes** – Trumpet  
**Eric Schneider** – Saxophone  
**Joshua Ramos** – Bass  
**Charles Heath III** – Drums



A marvelously misty ambience permeates vocalist Anne Burnell's third release, the unabashedly romantic, *Summer Days and Dreamy Nights*. Burnell interprets 13 pop-oriented tunes and standards with her signature graceful charm as her fluid silken voice navigates the various scales with remarkable agility and delightful phrasing.

Her unadorned artistry is on full display on the dramatic "A Time For Love." Accompanied only by producer and arranger Henry Johnson's shimmering resonant guitar lines Burnell's evocative enunciation of lyrics drips with heady poetry.

Even as lush orchestral sounds envelope and buoy her singing, as on "Dreamsville," her expressive intonation stands out with its warm, rich glow. Pianist Mike Logan's evocative piano chords and Johnson's undulating strings handsomely frame Burnell's passionate articulation.

Burnell, who is a deft at switching styles, showcases her versatility on a number of slightly edgier tracks. She brings a

cabaret-ish "Don't Ever Leave Me." Elsewhere, on the swinging "The Best Things in Life Are Free," she joins the frontline with hard-edged trumpeter Corey Wilkes and erudite saxophonist Eric Schneider with surprising facility. The superlative rhythm duo of drummer Charles Heath III and bassist Joshua Ramos rumbles in the background, occasionally breaking through with thrilling flourishes.

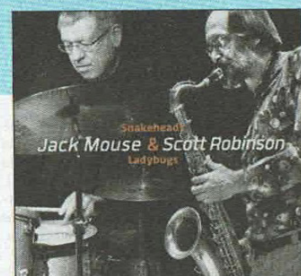
On the sunny Latin ballad "Moment to Moment" Burnell's effervescent song floats over Logan's crystalline phrases. Meanwhile on the breezy Bossa "I Got Los In His Arms" her vocalizing shimmies to her husband Mark Burnell's cascading notes and Johnson's silvery reverberations.

This engaging album aptly closes with the exuberant "Goin' Out of My Head." Her supple, honeyed vocals flow along the undulating instrumental refrains of the band with splendid, smooth sophistication. Burnell maintains her singularity by avoiding being pigeonholed. She proves herself, once more, adept at a variety of genres to all of which she brings a jazz musician sensibility.

## Snakeheads & Ladybugs

### Jack Mouse and Scott Robinson

**Jack Mouse** – Drums  
**Scott Robinson** – Saxophones, cornet, clarinet



Long time friends, drummer Jack Mouse and multi-instrumentalist Scott Robinson demonstrate their artistic kinship and seamless camaraderie with a set of spontaneous duets on the curious *Snakeheads & Ladybugs*. Despite its entirely adlib origins the album remains rather accessible and engaging and not at all abstruse.

Robinson's wailing saxophone over Mouse's hyper-rhythmic rolling drums creates a passionate and intriguing ambience on "Bolero Incognito." Robinson's longing notes pierce the enveloping silent pauses as Mouse's cymbals splash and shimmer darkly underneath. The result is quite evocative and stirring.

A similar dramatic flair imbues

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variety of genres both within and without jazz. In addition to the bolero mentioned above, their "Backward Glance" is an intelligent and stimulating deconstruction of a swing tune. "Freehop," on the other hand, has the crisp, clever freshness of bebop and the unfettered, intuitive approach of freer styles.

The aimless meander of few of the pieces becomes rather distracting but the musicians' superb improvisational skills keep them, nevertheless, quite delightful. "Orcan," for instance, has a mystical atmosphere that Mouse's resonant rumble and Robinson's thrilling, edgy howl create.

"Shapeshifter," the longest track on the record. Commencing with Mouse's cinematic, expectant beats and Robinson's wailing sax, it quickly evolves into an eastern-flavored poetic dialogue. Robinson showcases his versatility with a lilting, melancholic saxophone solo and a mellow, burnished cornet one. Mouse enhances the bittersweet nostalgia with his carefully placed, elegant rustles.

Mouse and Robinson pay homage to a

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Mouse's rattling shakers and Robinson's brief punctuating phrases, however, do not propel this hypnotic performance to a satisfying conclusion.

Likewise the harmonically vibrant "Fandango" finds Robinson's mournful reed sashaying to Mouse's percolating thuds and thrums without a progression to a memorable finale.

Although not meant for casual listeners and despite its few rough spots, this unique CD is both thought provoking and, in its own way, quite charming. It will definitely impress and engross open-minded fans of cerebral music.

—Hrayr Attarian