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MANDALA STEPHEN McQUARRY TRIO/Azure:

Just your nice, solid, swinging piano trio that serves up jazz piping hot. Tasty stuff throughout, this is good time, sitting down jazz that knows the right notes, the order to play them in and how to hit them just right. A solid set of pure entertainment, this is a nice reminder of what a sophisticated night out sounded like. Well done.

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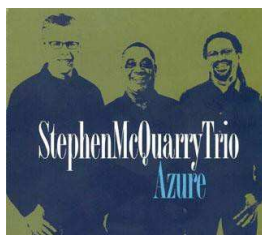
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5.0 out of 5 stars **Settling in for quality time, quality music, quality**

performers September 3, 2013

By Grady Harp [HALL OF FAME TOP 50 REVIEWER VINE VOICE](#)



By seeping in swing, bebop, contemporary, bossa nova and blues to overall tone the the Stephen McQuarry Trio has created a sound new for our time - and that sound is superb. To quote from the

album liner notes, "In his career, Stephen McQuarry has been usually heard with larger groups, writing music and playing with big bands,

nonets and octets. His previous recording *Introductions* found him writing inventive arrangements for *Resonance*, a unique band consisting of a saxophonist, flute, violin, viola, cello, bass, drums and his own piano. However *Azure* is something much different, a trio set that gives listeners the opportunity to hear Stephen McQuarry's talents as a pianist being fully showcased. "I had been mostly writing for larger ensembles," says Stephen, "but decided that I should also adapt some of my modal-informed compositions for my trio since we were playing jobs. It ultimately seemed logical to record the tunes with the trio." The pianist first met bassist Ted Burik ten years ago. When while playing "Autumn Leaves" they both quoted liberally from Keith Jarrett's version, they bonded as musicians. Stephen met drummer Greg German at a jazz workshop five years ago. "It is a pleasure to work with Greg on original music because he can always quickly hear what he needs to do and he fits in perfectly." Both musicians add a great deal to Stephen McQuarry's music, giving the music swing, taste and a strong base on which the pianist can improvise freely.

So here we have the well-honed trio - Stephen McQuarry, Piano, Ted Burik, Bass, Greg German, Drums - performing the following works all composed by Stephen McQuarry:

Blues For Jack, Azure, Lunar, Little Brown House, Sunday Afternoon, Azadeh, A View From My Heart, You Never Know, 34 Miles Away, Lydia

This is the trio that is here to stay and we can only hope for more albums of this quality in the near future. For now, enjoy!

BEBOP SPOKEN HERE



CD Review: Stephen McQuarry Trio - Azure

Stephen McQuarry (pno); Ted Burik (bs); Greg German (dms).

Another fine piano trio. This time all originals - or are they? Well, yes they are although some tracks do paint a portrait of an individual.

Blues For Jack is very much Monk orientated although John McLaughlin is quoted as being the main influence.

Not a bad combination to work around! *Azure* is a lovely

flowing piece with no one in mind save the pianist himself whose original and complex chord progressions present a worthwhile challenge to both player and listener. *Lunar*, the liner notes tell me, uses the compositional technique of inverted melody and chord changes based on the tune *Solar*.

Little Brown House, *Sunday Afternoon* and *Azadeh* are tributes, respectively, to Tadd Dameron, Bill Evans and Herbie Hancock albeit with McQuarry's own stamp - I don't think the subjects would object even though the Evans feature manages to bring *Giant Steps* into the equation!

After the sensitive *A View From My Heart* comes *You Never Know* - a boppish Charlie Parker type theme. *34 Miles Away* is inspired by Joe Zawinal's *74 miles Away*. The trick here is that Zawinal's was in 7/4 whereas McQuarry's is in 3/4. *Lydia* is a piece in the Lydian Mode (someone remind me what that is) and is inspired by Clare Fischer.

It's a good album with fine piano playing, excellent bass and sympathetic drums. Didn't quite hit me the way the Mike Jones Trio did but still well worth checking out.

Stephen McQuarry Trio - Azure is currently available on Mandala Records MR104.