

CD Review: Jazz Society Of Oregon

By George Fendel

Influences, Bryant Allard, trumpet. Portlander Bryant Allard obviously believes that there's still a place in this world for lyrical, swinging, sensible, straight ahead jazz, and he gives us just that on this showcase for his outstanding quartet. A couple of Bryant originals, "Balmer's Mood" and "Remembering Hollis," get this session off the ground in fine fashion. Tenor titan David Evans guests on the latter tune and returns later on a scintillating version of Gershwin's "Who Cares." The remainder of the CD is divided thoughtfully between standards ("I'll Close My Eyes"); jazz gems like Jobim's "Triste" and Benny Harris's bop anthem, "Crazeology"; Blue Mitchell's attractive medium blues, "Sir John"; and two more Bryant originals with strong melody lines. Allard never forces the issue and does not indulge in high note bravado. Rather, it's almost as though the trumpet plays itself, sometimes reminding me a bit of Art Farmer, one of the most lyrical cats to ever blow trumpet. The quartet is completed by Greg Goebel (piano), Dan Presley (bass) and Dave Avere (drums). I would like to have heard a bit more acoustic piano, but Goebel is subtle and straight down the middle on the Fender Rhodes cuts. All in all, this is one of the top releases of 2007. *PHD Music, 2007, 52:57*
