

Joe Locke Geoffrey Keezer

SIGNING—Motema Music MTM-85 . *Signing; The Lost Lenore; Darth Alexis; Naima; Hide and Seek; Her Sanctuary; Terraces; This is Just to Say.*

PERSONNEL: Joe Locke, vibes; Geoffrey Keezer, piano, Rhodes and omnisphere; Terreon Gully, drums; Mike Pope, electric and acoustic bass.

By Eric Harabadian

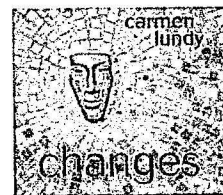
There is an ethereal and Euro-jazz kind of quality to this album. It kind of references some of Gary Burton's work with ECM Records in the '70s and early '80s. Locke plays with an open and very demonstrative style that fully complements Keezer's semi-classical and expressionistic post-bop chords and phrasing. Gully often

plays in-the-pocket but uses his kit in a more ornamental fashion as well. Pope rounds out their atmospheric sound with a warm and resonant backdrop.

The title track "Signing" typifies the group's intent with a Joe Locke composition addressing communication and connecting with others. That is certainly this ensemble's strong suit as Locke's vibes provide the initial anchor, laying down bright and shimmering accents. From there is a puzzle of a composition that unfolds where each musical voice is an integral piece that completes the whole. Keezer plays an asymmetrical piano cycle that co-mingles with Gully's straight ahead rock-type beats for a monumental effect. Coltrane's "Naima" is a great interpretation that takes on a very dreamy and spacey quality. This was originally commissioned by the Scottish National Jazz Orchestra but the arrangement adapted for quartet is brilliant. The ballad "Hide and Seek" by Imogen Heap is a sweet and somewhat folksy kind of piece. Mild electronic effects blended with piano and vibes give the tune a natural vocal-like touch. They also seem to adhere pretty close to the melody and take their harmonic liberties judiciously. "Her Sanctuary" is another noteworthy piece written by Locke. They employ a nice use of dynamics creating a very cinematic and expressive mood. The vibist and keyboardist truly up their game here where they conduct a

musical conversation that dovetails and overlaps in a seamless harmonic convergence. Keezer's tune "Terraces" is inspired by terraced rice fields on steep mountainsides in parts of Asia. The main harmonic structures ascend and descend in a specific manner reminiscent of traveling up and down a staircase. There is a fine electric bass solo by Pope on this one as well. "This is Just to Say" is a Locke composition inspired by the poetry of William Carlos Williams. It's a tender ballad made more poignant and effective by strong unison hooks between vibes and piano.

The Joe Locke/Geoffrey Keezer Group has a light fusion edge to its music - with their use of some electronics and rock rhythms. But, overall, they are an exciting and inventive modern jazz ensemble that blends the best of both worlds—something that could expand their fan base.



Carmen Lundy

CHANGES – Afrasia (www.carmenlundy.com). *The Night Is Young; So Beautiful; Love Thy Neighbor; A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square; Sleeping Alone; Too Late For Love; Dance The Dance; To Be Loved By You; Where Love Surrounds Us.*

PERSONNEL: Carmen Lundy: vocals, harp, string and horn arrangements; Anthony Wonsey: piano, Fender Rhodes; Kenny Davis: bass, electric bass; Jamison Ross: drums, percussion; Oscar Castro-Neves: guitar; Nolan Shaheed: trumpet, flugelhorn; George Bohannon: trombone

By Nora McCarthy

What Carmen Lundy has achieved in her recent offering, *changes*, takes a lifetime to perfect. A vocal artisan, musician, highly accomplished performer, band leader, composer/arranger, lyricist, and educator she blossoms with beauty and fulfillment on eight original compositions reflecting a complexity of subtle moods from a personal yet very relatable perspective.

Lundy's choice of instrumentation and harmonically appealing arrangements provide a full bodied backdrop over which she designed a lovely mood infused CD. Her choice of musicians include seasoned veterans well versed in many musical languages – sophisticated, distinctive, and exquisite players who convey Lundy's original material with finesse, expertise and timeless style. The more I listened to this CD, the more I looked forward to listening again.

Her songs strike a chord within the heart and soul of the listener and speak intuitively to

BRENDA
HOPKINS MIRANDA

Listen to Puerto Rico's most original
pianist and find out why she says
music is her favorite form of travelling.

"Simple" available at
CD Baby, Amazon & iTunes

www.brendahopkinsmiranda.com