

New Perspective

Dexter Moses is a very impressive young saxophonist who is making his recording debut on New Perspective. He earned a Bachelor's degree in Jazz Studies and a Master's in Jazz Composition and Arranging at North Carolina Central University and has already performed with such notables as Branford Marsalis, Delfeayo Marsalis' Uptown Jazz Orchestra, Nnenna Freelon, and Joey Calderazzo among others. He dedicates New Perspective to his mentors and particularly to the late Dr. Brian Horton.

New Perspective is a bit brief (the six numbers clock in a little over 31 minutes) but the quality of the music is quite high. Moses is featured on alto, tenor and soprano in a quartet with Christian Tamburr who doubles on vibraphone and piano, bassist Kenny Phelps, and drummer Dorien Dotson.

The set begins with the fast and boppish theme of "D.D's Theme," a cooking performance on which Moses and Tamburr (on vibes) take heated solos. The jazz waltz "Road Duck" has a happy melody and 29-bar choruses (rather than the customary 32) that leave listeners wanting a bit more. Dexter Moses displays an obvious affection for the Jerome Kern standard "Lovely To Look At," playing melodically during his colorful arrangement which displays a bit of sly wit.

"New Perspective" is particularly adventurous with its utilization of different rhythmic patterns yet the quartet has no difficulty swinging all the way with strong tenor, piano, and bass solos. Inspired by Langston Hughes' "Freedom," Dexter Moses' "Freedom (When I'm Dead)" has a somber melody and a very emotional statement by the composer on soprano who takes his time and builds up the intensity gradually. The memorable set concludes with a slow and heartfelt version of "I'll Be Seeing You" that has some beautiful singing from Lillian Faith and strong support from Moses on alto.

Dexter Moses' New Perspective is not only one of the most impressive jazz debuts of this year but a mature statement that makes one look forward to his future performances. This set is highly recommended.

Scott Yanow, jazz journalist/historian