

Cadence

The Independent Journal of Creative Improvised Music

Another fine guitarist, Joshua Breakstone, pays homage on (4) to one of his early influences, Grant Green, who helped establish the guitar/organ trio concept in the 1950s and early '60s while recording as leader and sideman for Blue Note Records. Breakstone has enlisted the help of two of Green's former comrades in arms, organist Jack McDuff and drummer Al Harewood, to help recreate the proper ambience in a program of songs that were (with one exception) either written or performed by Green, who died in 1979 at age 47 (Street of Dreams/Grantstand/Moon River/Green's Greenery/Idle Moments/Falling in Love with Love/Remember. January 29 and March 5, 1993, Englewood Cliffs, NJ. Total time, 50:54). The first five selections feature guitar/organ/drums, the last two a quartet comprised of Breakstone, pianist Kenny Barron, bassist Ray Drummond and drummer Keith Copeland. This is a hard-swinging, well-played session from start to finish with Green's two compositions, the cooker "Grantstand" and the blues "Green's Greenery," among its highlights, as is Duke Pearson's classic "Idle Moments," which was the title of one of Green's 1963 Blue Note recordings. Although Breakstone says in his notes that recreating the mood of the original would have been impossible, he and his colleagues don't miss by much. The trio also delivers splendid readings of "Street of Dreams" and especially Henry Mancini's "Moon River," which I must admit has never been one of my favorite melodies, but one whose charms, such as they are, are fully realized here in a medium-tempo excursion in which everyone plays with impeccable taste and precision. The quartet pieces are no less agreeable, with Barron's always-elegant piano filling in admirably for McDuff and Drummond/Copeland lending yeomanlike support. The mood is upbeat and sunny on "Falling in Love with Love" and Irving Berlin's "Remember," the only selection with no direct ties to Green himself. It's hard to find fault with anything here (except perhaps the 50:54 time). This is an excellent session, rhythmically strong and harmonically rich, and a splendid tribute to a talented musician who died much too far ahead of his time.

CADENCE
7/96