

Reviews

Anton Schwartz

Radiant Blue (Anton Jazz)

MUCH LIKE CHRIS POTTER, Anton Schwartz is a nice and unassuming guy to talk to, yet both turn into modern day tenor titans as soon as they put the mouthpiece between their lips. Here on Schwartz's third album (not including his Christmas EP), he's joined by a quintet that includes high school buddy Peter Bernstein on guitar and pianist Taylor Eigsti for a collection of nine hard bopping originals with one Jo-bim bossa nova thrown in for good measure. There a lot to like here with sharp arrangements and crisp straight ahead playing that seems to hit all the right notes. Highlights include the urgently swinging "Slightly Off Course" and the straight down the middle and melodic "Phantom Dance." Five years between proper albums has been way too long, but this album proves that Schwartz wasn't sloughing off in the interim.



– Tad Hendrickson

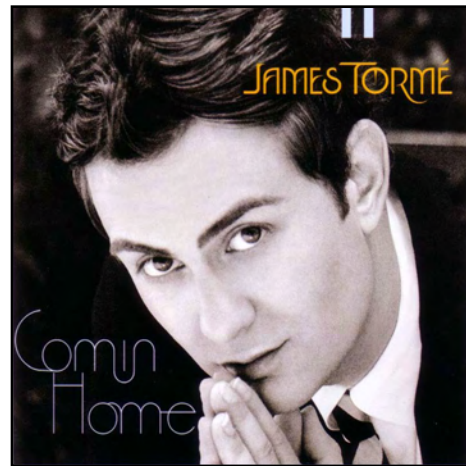
Contact: Groov Marketing
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Add Date: Aug. 8
Release Date: Aug. 8

James Tormé

Comin' Home (Independent)

SECOND GENERATION JAZZ musicians have been hit or miss over the years. Some like Ravi Coltrane or Carolyn Leonhart have carved out some separation from mom or pops, while others haven't. James Tormé has the warm timbre of his father Mel, pretty good scat chops, and decent sense of

jazz phrasing. Unfortunately, the young singer also seems to have listened to the late-90s boy bands – he's taken a cheap hot-buttered R&B influence where he's bending pitch and toying with falsetto as a device to convey emotion (apparently), but really just annoys, particularly on "I've Got Plenty Of Nothing" and "Ella Be Good." Better are Bob Dorrough's "Comin' Home Baby" and "A Sleepin' Bee." The quintet backing him is solid throughout; now all he needs decent jazz producer to get him on the right vocal course.



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Mike Stern

Who Let The Cats Out? (Heads Up)

AFTER A COUPLE of small-label releases following his terrific 2001 finale for Atlantic, *Voices*, guitarist Mike Stern has landed with *Heads Up*, a perfect fit for an artist who isn't easily categorized. Stern combines some great straight-ahead playing and some of his most lyrical work with his earlier fusion influences and a couple of vocal pieces reminiscent of *Voices*, this time with Richard Bona, for an excitingly varied album. Stern's more funky selections include "Roll With It" and the opening "Tumble Home," while more mainstream stations may prefer tunes like the title track or "Leni Goes Shopping," or perhaps the ballads "We're with You," and "All You Need." Bona is heard on the burning "Good Question" and on the pretty "Language." College stations might latch onto the shuffling groove and heavy chords of ➤