

Victor Bailey - Low Blow (1999)



01 - Low Blow 02 - Sweet Tooth 03 - City Living 04 - Do You Know Who-Continuum 05 - Knee-Jerk Reaction 06 - She Left Me 07 - Graham Cracker 08 - Babytalk 09 - Feels Like A Hug 10 - Brain Teaser Victor Bailey - Bass, Keyboards, Mu-Tron, Synthesizer, Synthesizer Bass, Vocals Jim Beard - Fender Rhodes, Guitar, Keyboards, Piano (Grand), Wah Wah Guitar, Wurlitzer Michael Bearden - Keyboards, Piano Dennis Chambers - Drums Bill Evans - Sax (Soprano) Kenny Garrett - Sax (Soprano), Saxophone Omar Hakim - Drums Henry Hey - Keyboards Wayne Krantz - Guitar

On his second solo album (following his first by nine years), bass player Victor Bailey is quick to acknowledge his heroes: "Graham Cracker," with its funky, plucked bass notes, is a tribute to Larry Graham, while "Continuum," a tune by Jaco Pastorius, Bailey's predecessor in Weather Report, is given a vocalese lyric written and sung by Bailey and turned into "Do You Know Who," which contains lines like "Boy when I first heard Jaco play/I've got to admit I was blown away." Beyond these overt homages, however, Bailey doesn't really betray much of their influence in his playing or original tunes. More often, as a player he recalls a third hero, Stanley Clarke, while his compositions and their jazz fusion arrangements usually sound like they could fit in easily on one of the albums he made with Weather Report. (The presence on four tracks of drummer Omar Hakim, his partner in the Weather Report rhythm section, doesn't hurt.) In his press biography, Bailey complains that he wasn't able to record solo for almost a decade because record companies either wanted "straight-ahead" or "smooth" jazz, and it wasn't until he ran into Zebra Records that he was allowed to "just play my bass and record the music I wanted to record." That music turns out to sound like the fusion style popular in the 1970s and '80s. ---William Ruhlmann, Rovi

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