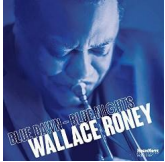


Wallace Roney - Blue Dawn-Blue Nights (2019)

Written by bluesever

Tuesday, 08 October 2019 14:27 -

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1 *Bookenz* 6:12 2 *Why Should There Be Stars* 5:28 3 *Wolfbane* 7:50 4 *New Breed* 8:10 5 *Don't Stop Me Now* 6:59 6 *In A Dark Room* 8:57 7 *Venus Rising* 5:11 8 *Elliptical* 4:15
Paul Cuffari Bass Emilio Modeste Sax (Soprano), Sax (Tenor) Kojo Odu Roney Drums Wallace Roney Trumpet Lenny White Drums Oscar Williams II Piano Quintin Zoto Guitar

Wallace Roney's eighth album for the HighNote label, 2019's *Blue Dawn-Blue Nights*, finds the trumpeter collaborating with a cadre of young lions and balancing dusky after-hours warmth and propulsive post-bop modalism. The album comes three years after the similarly expansive *A Place in Time*, which featured veterans Gary Bartz, Lenny White, and Patrice Rushen. From that album, only White returns here, playing on half of *Blue Dawn-Blue Nights*. He and Roney are also joined by an invigorating ensemble including Roney's nephew drummer Kojo Odu Roney, tenor saxophonist Emilio Modeste, pianist Oscar Williams II, and bassist Paul Cuffari. Somewhat of a departure from Roney's past work, *Blue Dawn-Blue Nights* features songs written by his bandmates, along with a handful of deftly curated covers. The result is a surprisingly cohesive album that benefits from each player's unique yet clearly like-minded point-of-view. Roney opens the album with keyboardist Wayne Linsey's roiling, R&B-inflected "Bookendz." A longtime friend of Roney's, Linsey wrote songs for Miles Davis, and "Bookendz" certainly brings to mind Davis' fusion period with both White and Odu Roney supplying the song's kinetic rhythm. Shifting gears, the band eases into the yearning ballad "Why Should There Be Stars," which works as a showcase for Roney's plaintive lyricism. Contrasting that is White's funky "Wolfbane," a circular groover in which Roney smears and glides against the drummer's dynamic percussion waves. Also compelling is the group's reading of David Liebman's dissonant mid-tempo swinger "New Breed." Originally recorded by Elvin Jones for his 1973 date *Mr. Jones*, here the melody is played with Harmon-muted intensity by Roney and Modeste. Elsewhere, they sink into "Don't Stop Me Now," a slow-burning R&B slow jam culled from Miles Davis' '80s period, and again evoke Davis' late-'60s quintet on Williams' impressionistic modal piece "In a Dark Room." Closing the album are two of Modeste's compositions, beginning with the driving "Venus Rising" and finishing with the far-eyed "Elliptical," both of which benefit from Roney and his band's burnished harmonic textures.

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---Matt Collar, AllMusic Review

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