Gil Scott-Heron - Reflections (1981)



1.Storm Music 4:51 2.Grandma's Hands 5:24 3.Is That Jazz? 3:43 4.Morning Thoughts 4:37 5.Inner City Blues (Poem: "The Siege Of New Orleans) 5:46 6.Gun 4:00 7."B" Movie 12:10 Bass – Robert Gordon Drums – Kenny Powell Electric Piano – Gil Scott-Heron Guitar – Ed Brady Piano, Electric Piano, Organ, Clavinet, Synthesizer, Harmonica – Glen (Astro) Turner Soprano Saxophone, Alto Saxophone, Flute [Flutes] – Vernon James Tenor Saxophone – Carl Cornwell, Leon Williams Trumpet, Flugelhorn – Kenny Sheffield Vocals – Gil Scott-Heron + Backing Vocals – Clydene Jackson, Julia Waters, Maxine WatersGuitar Guitar [Bubble Guitar] – Kenny Lazarus Percussion, Timbales – Larry MacDonald

Although a major across-the-board hit always eluded the poet, singer, and activist Gil Scott-Heron, this album does contain one of his best-known songs. "B-Movie," an extended attack on Ronald "Ray-gun," unleashes 12 minutes of vitriol about the then recently elected president. Beginning with the declaration "Mandate, my ass," it's a laundry list of fears about Reagan, fantasizing that his election meant "we're all actors" in some surreal film. Delivered over a taut funk groove, parts of it are still funny. Elsewhere, Scott-Heron takes an early stab at endorsing firearm control on "Gun"; slows things down for "Morning Thoughts"; and explores reggae's rhythms and revolutionary power on "Storm Music," a direction he'd pursue more fully on his next album, Moving Target. The disc also includes a pair of covers that offer varying degrees of success: Bill Withers' "Grandma's Hands" is a natural for Scott-Heron's warm baritone and a bright soul-jazz arrangement from the Midnight Band, but the version of Marvin Gaye's "Inner City Blues," while it swings convincingly, has a lengthy spoken-word riff that fails to embellish on the pain implicit in the original. Overall, Reflections doesn't capture Scott-Heron at the peak of his game, though anyone who enjoyed the other works from his Arista period certainly won't be disappointed. ---Dan LeRoy, AllMusic Review

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