

Sharel Cassity

Relentless

JLP 0901001

★★★★

Any chauvanist jazzers who still believe blowing post-bop saxophone is the preserve of the male of the species haven't heard

young guns Grace Kelly and Tineke Postma. Sharel Cassity is another no-nonsense lady of the horn, and this is a crackling release with a New York tight sextet, plus guests, anchored by session vets Dwayne Burno and E.J. Strickland.

Six cuts on this not overlong CD are Cassity originals, save for her arrangement of Charles Tolliver's "On The Nile" and a tribute to the leader by her partner, trombonist Michael Dease, whose solos are a highlight—check his lovely tone, timing and range on "Still."

"Say What?" could be Cassity's response to sexist presumptions, her beautifully rounded soprano jumping out of the speakers unannounced, showing off articulate phrasing and ability to gearshift while maintaining the integrity of a driving line. Given her mentors have included Steve Wilson and Vincent Herring, no surprise Cassity's solos have an



insurgent quality, tune titles further hinting at a determined forward motion. But she has a sense of when to suspend a thought or emotion, as on the outro to "Still" and the faintly Trnish "Love's Lament," on which her deep blue alto wanes with gorgeous melancholy.

"Song Of Those Who Seek" is Cassity's cleverest composition

structurally and is impeccably navigated, though elements within it recall something you may have heard before. Cassity's inquisitive legato solo features a passing "If I Should Lose You" quote, but she never loses her train of thought; Dease muddies his pretty tone with harmon mute, and there is a glittery solo from Evans. Cassity offers warm flutework elsewhere, but her uptempo alto is the star of the show on a barreling "No Turning Back" on which Pelt and Evans get to butter their chops, too.

—Michael Jackson

Relentless: Say What?; Still; Relentless; Call To Order; Love's Lament; Song Of Those Who Seek; No Turning Back; On The Nile. (46:09)

Personnel: Sharel Cassity, alto and soprano sax, flute; Jeremy Pelt, trumpet; Michael Dease, trombone; Orrin Evans, piano; Dwayne Burno, bass; E.J. Strickland, drums; Thomas Barber, flugelhorn; Andres Boyarsky, tenor sax; Don Braden, alto flute.