

Dune™

ABRAM WILSON

The Guardian
6 April 2007

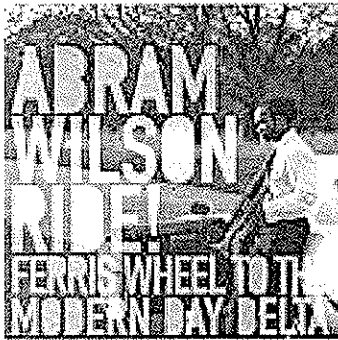
World CD

Abram Wilson

Ride! Ferris Wheel to the Modern Day Delta

★★★★★ (Dune)

John L. Walters



New Orleans-born trumpeter and vocalist Abram Wilson follows his impressive debut album with a sideways shift towards the source of the music. Ride! is a moral tale, the progress of a hip pilgrim (or rake) told through jazz composition, spoken word, song and scat. It's less wordy than A Life in the Day of B19: Tales of the Towerblock, the similarly ambitious project by Wilson's friend and labelmate Soweto Kinch. Where the explicitly British (and more anxious) B19 mixes improvisation with rap and radio drama, the feelgood Ride! forges new links between contemporary acoustic jazz and the blues. Listen to Life Ain't So Bad, with its gutsy harmonica (Errol Linton); the tuba-driven funk of Looking to the Outside; the raucous rhythms of Blow to the Head; the forceful Confrontation and Acceptance; and the opening, heartfelt I Want More For Me Than This. Wilson handles his narrative and melodic themes with huge confidence and a generous musical heart.



ABRAM WILSON

Echoes
May 2007

ABRAM WILSON

RIDE! FERRIS WHEEL TO THE MODERN DAY DELTA [DUNE]

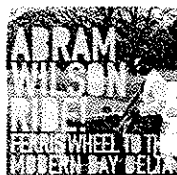
If 2004's *Jazz Warrior* showed that the trumpeter-vocalist had energy to burn then this new set makes the point that he also has ambition and imagination in his use of both words and music. This is a concept album built on the age-old clash of tradition and modernity with blues and jazz in the role of the former and soul and hip-hop in the latter. Using the parable of the young musician led astray from his heritage by a bad boy group leaning towards bling and drug culture, Wilson cleverly brings the past and present of black music into creative collision without deploying any digital technology. *Ride!* has a heavy beat but no sampled beats. It has sub-bass but no programmed bass. It has the thickness of modern "urban" music and the finesse that often eludes it. The sleight of hand is all in the instrumentation: drums with a mule kick on the foot pedal; tuba, trombone and acoustic bass to create a seismic low end; guitar, harmonica, brass and reeds to fashion unusual timbres for blues-inspired sounds. While Wilson really asserts himself as a leader/conceptualist, a fine ensemble comprising the likes of Michael Mwenso, Patrick Clahar and Andy Grappy also makes *Ride!* a musical journey well worth taking.
KEVIN LE GENDRE ★★☆☆

Dune™

ABRAM WILSON

The Times – The Knowledge
18 May 2007

Jazz/world



ABRAM WILSON
Ride! Ferris Wheel to
the Modern Day Delta
(Dune)

★★★★☆

The small Dune label in London is becoming the unlikely home of the concept album: after Soweto Kinch's *Tales of the Tower Block*, here's this New Orleans-born trumpeter telling the tale of a

young musician fleeing home to discover his destiny on the road. Never mind the stagey, spoken opening, the story serves as a vehicle for some delightful loose-limbed Charlie Mingus-like jazz and Delta blues. Wilson plays horn, sings, scats, and leads various ensembles including a New Orleans-style brass band. The album reveals him as a talented arranger and composer — even if he breaks no new musical ground — aided by some versatile sidemen. From the tuba-led *Looking to the Outside* to the restless pulse of *Blow to the Head*, this is music of fire and heart.

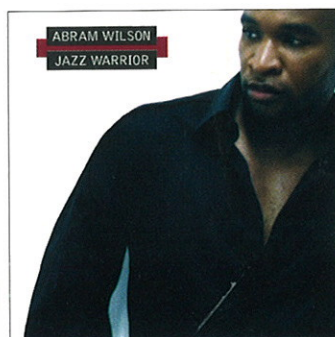
JOHN BUNGEY

Abram Wilson

Echoes
December 2004

hot biscuits

KEVIN LE GENDRE SHOWS STRENGTH



ABRAM WILSON JAZZ WARRIOR [DUNE]

New Orleans-New York-London, the new axis? Very possibly if trumpeter and vocalist Wilson has anything to do with it; the thing that instantly hits you in this debut by the man who did secondary school in Crescent city, higher education in the big Apple and is now on post-grad in the Smoke, is its rousing energy. With a profound understanding of both the swing kinesiology of New Orleans jazz and the groove pneumatics of hip-hop, Wilson has fashioned a sound that has room for both elaborate unison and solo expression as well as pounding, incessant, sinew-stretching grooves. This is music to which one might lend limb as well as ear. Fronting a well-oiled horn section of alto saxophonist Nathaniel Facey and tenor saxophonist Patrick Clahar, Wilson reveals himself to be a soloist of Brownie-esque warmth and lyricism, continually unfurling infectious melodic statements on most of the tunes. This slightly overshadows his vocal performances on *Free Myself* and the brave reprise of Stevie's *Golden Lady* but the playing and singing make for a coherent whole over the 14 tracks on the set. The flighty but weighty character of the rhythm section - where Neil Charles' bulky acoustic bass frequently doubles Andrew McCormack's piano to good effect - stands up well too, enabling Wilson to bring several strains of black music together without losing his own sense of creative logic. An energised and energising set from a young musician whose desire to network jazz, funk and rap avoids the standard and largely fatuous attempts at "urban hip-bop."

★★★ 1/2

ECHOES • 2004

Abram Wilson

ejazz.fm
December 2004



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Friday 03 December 2004

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ejazz recommends

::ALBUM OF THE MONTH



ejazz recommends album of the month

Abram Wilson - Jazz Warrior

Dune Records has released the debut album of their first US signing, Abram Wilson. The label, home of feted and award winning artists, Soweto Kinch, Denys Baptiste and Jazz Jamaica All Stars, signed the prodigiously talented musician and composer, believing him to be the hottest trumpeter to hit these shores in decades. He is also a fine singer/songwriter as is amply demonstrated on the album Jazz Warrior.

Born in Arkansas and raised in New Orleans, Abram's precocious talent was recognised at the age of 13 when he was accepted by The New Orleans Center For Creative Arts – responsible for producing artists such as Wynton Marsalis, Terence Blanchard, Harry Connick Jr and Nicholas Payton – where he graduated four years later. He then earned a scholarship to Ohio Wesleyan University where he studied classical trumpet graduating with a bachelor's degree in musical education. He went on to attain his masters in jazz performance and composition at the world-renowned Eastman Conservatory in Rochester, New York.

After a spell in New York he moved to London in 2002 and after a chance meeting with Dune at one of the label's jam sessions, he quickly became a mainstay in the bands of his fellow recording artists, signing in 2003.

Jazz Warrior features some of the brightest young talent on the UK scene: Nathaniel Facey (alto sax), Neil Charles (double bass), and Shaney Forbes (drums) – all graduates of the acclaimed Tomorrow's Warriors collective founded by veteran bassist, Gary Crosby; Andrew McCormack (piano) – also a TW graduate and pivotal member of Denys Baptiste's award-winning ensembles; and Patrick Clahar (tenor sax/flute), known mostly for his work with the Jazz Warriors, Incognito, and Bill Bruford's Earthworks.

In addition to his outstanding technique and artistry on the trumpet, Abram is an excellent singer/songwriter, comfortable with jazz scat to rap, ballads to boogaloo, RnB to hip hop, reggae and ska to soul.

Jazz Warrior resoundingly demonstrates Abram's acute sense of both tradition and changing times, and seamlessly blends jazz with hip hop, RnB and New Orleans grooves. Produced by Jason Yarde, the album contains over 70 minutes of great music spread across 14 tracks, all originals by Abram bar one – a wonderful arrangement of Stevie Wonder's classic Golden Lady.

A highly accessible and successful crossover album, Jazz Warrior is an outstanding debut for this charismatic and engaging young artist who seems to have everything going for him.

Ejazz 2004

JAZZ

★★★★★

**Abram
Wilson**

Jazz Warrior

DUNE



This is an astonishingly accomplished debut from the New Orleans-born and raised trumpeter Abram Wilson. But that will come as no surprise to anyone who's seen Wilson, who moved here in 2002, with Soweto Kinch's band. In fact, so good is he and such presence does he display live that it's clear that a bit of a fuss was going to be made over him pretty soon. Not only does his melt-in-the-mouth horn stride comfortably over bop, soul, tango, New Orleans-style and other genres in his excellent originals, but he can sing, scat and rap very well too. Sensational. **Sholto Byrnes**

Stunning piece of work

Jazz Warrior Abram Wilson
Dune Records CD 011
P.O.Box 665, Harrow,
Middlesex, HA3 5BE
by Charlie Salt

The awful thing about this CD is that if I hadn't been sent a review copy I would never have come across it.

This is tremendous debut for Abram Wilson on the Dune Label. *Jazz Warrior* (The title could not be more apt) successfully blends Jazz, hip hop and r'n'b so well.

This album is an hour and half of pure elegance and sophistication, it is a stunning piece of work, I cannot praise it highly enough. The band are so tight and pick up the groove so well, and, boy - can this guy sing!

Abram Wilson must surely be one of the best trumpet players around. I just can't wait to catch them live.

Funny thing is, I usually hate this sort of stuff, but this is definitely my album of the year! Watch for the name Abram Wilson.
