

Cadence

Cadence
July 1999
Robert Spencer

Pete McCann calls himself "a really big fan of the way Ornette plays free within tonalities." Fandom translates to action on "Grimlock" and "Hoedown" which have a decidedly harmolodic feel, and the other tracks, although they traffic less explicitly in Ornetteian motifs, are marked by the same loose-limbed approach to the tonal framework. "Sheriff Bob" nods to the country blues that Ornette and Charlie Haden used to pastiche, but here it's presented more straightforwardly.

McCann's principal accomplice is tenorman Bruce Huron, who dances on the harmonic brink on "Open Gate" and the metalish "Victim Sweepstakes." Peter Epstein acquits himself honorably, especially on soprano "Parable". Although the possibilities are somewhat restricted by the smooth-jazz tinge of the tunes he attacks with the straight horn, he refuses to be defeated by the material, and consistently ventures into areas not frequently visited by the legions of soprano smoothies.

The guitar work of the leader ranges from feedback-rich metalisms to sweet acoustic musings; on "Hoevenen" both approaches coexist, with a frenetic middle section bookended between moments of calm. His stylistic range throughout the disc is impressive.