

23 Mar 2015

## Benny Sharoni

Slant Signature

CD

Papaya Records



Let's get one thing straight from the start, this album is fabulous. It is filled with talent and verve and amazing music on top. It's one of a kind, a bebop tour de force of the highest calibre. It doesn't just be and bop, it shuffles it goes Caribbean and does some of the most inspired and tightest jazz things I have heard in many years. A happy, and for the most part rhythmic affair, that provides an incredibly talented sextet the space to impress and beguile in equal measure. The musicians are: Benny Sharoni (tenor sax); Jim Rotondi (trumpet); Joe Barbato (piano); Mike Mele (guitar); Todd Baker (bass); Steve Langone (drums). Sharoni is a Boston based Israeli who has made one other album as a leader and collaborated on three others, if *Slant Signature* is anything to go by there need to be a lot more of both.

The album is made up of both originals and tributes to the music composed by Lee Morgan, Freddy Hubbard and pianist Ray Bryant. The band plays the finest bebop one is likely to hear today, they play with confidence, accuracy, sensitivity, speed and a rhythmic groove that you rarely hear, they have the be and the bop sorted. Jazz is not always fun but this album will be cherished by jazzers of all persuasions. This is helped by a recording that does the musicians justice, it is clear, fast and clean but also sweet and natural, instruments are placed realistically and solidly across and within the soundstage. To my ears Freddy Hubbard's Down Under and Sharoni's Bitter Drops are the strongest. But each and every track is a sheer and rare joy to listen to. Very highly recommended. Even though it is only March, I have put this album at or near the very top of my best of 2015 shortlist. Buy it.

*Reuben Klein*