

Steve Cole – Moonlight (2010)

Written by bluesever

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01 - Moonlight 02 - You Can Close Your Eyes 03 – I'm afraid the masquerade is over 04 - Undun 05 - Angel 06 - You Don't Know Me 07 - Cry Me a River 08 - The Look of Love 09 - The Long and Winding Road Steve Cole - tenor & soprano saxes Russell Ferrante - piano Mike Logan - piano,programming Steve Rodby - acoustic bass Dale Prasco - guitar David Hildebrand - electric bass Tom Hipskind - drums Dede Sampaio - percussion David Mann - tenor,alto and baritone saxes,flute + The Millennium Chamber Players of Chicago Conducted by Robert Katkov-Trevino

And now for something completely different but not at all unexpected. Windy City saxophonist Steve Cole, who released his debut CD in 1998, has been a steady force on the smooth-jazz charts and touring scene for more than a decade. He's also a member of the Sax Pack, an in-the-pocket trio with fellow saxophonists Jeff Kashiwa and Kim Waters. It seemed about time for Cole to attempt something different, and he's done it here with a rich collection of old and new American standards backed by the lush sounds of the Millennium Chamber Players of Chicago.

Mixing traditional standards like "Moonlight" and the close-your-eyes beautiful "(I'm Afraid) The Masquerade Is Over" with new versions of the Guess Who's "Undun" and James Taylor's "You Can Close Your Eyes" was the right move. (The latter is an album highlight and features Cole's soprano and a folksy guitar arrangement.) Although I'm not sure if another arrangement of "The Look of Love" was necessary, listening to Sarah McLachlan's "Angel" and the Beatles "The Long and Winding Road" in fresh ways is a delight.

In addition to the strings, the arrangements on this compelling CD include harp, woodwinds and tempered brass. The supporting rhythm section consists of Mike Logan on keyboards, Russell Ferrante on piano and Steve Rodby on bass. The string arrangements are provided by Michael

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Cunningham. --- Brian Soergel, jazztimes.com

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