



MIKE POPE

COLD TRUTH, WARM HEART [Nineteen-Eight]

Underrated and under-recorded, **Mike Pope** is a true underground bass force, with his considerable musical abilities matched by his gift for designing high-end bass preamps and related electronics. Pope's first

solo effort in a decade marks a triumphant return that finds his composing, arranging, upright, and 6-string skills in peak form. Accompanied by Gotham A-list jazzers Joe Locke on vibes, saxophonist Seamus Blake, and keyboardist Geoffrey Keezer, Pope drives the opening, title track samba, capping matters with a probing solo. Other standout moments on upright include the swung funk groove of the Steps Ahead-ish "Shadow of Doubt," a reflective solo on the pensive ballad "What I Meant to Say," and a nimble melody reading of 19th-century Russian composer Reinhold Glière's "Romance." Pope's 6-string first rumbles in on the free-form jam "Out of the Ether" before taking the lead on a bossa-fied rendering of Chopin's "Prelude In E Min Op. 28 No. 4" and issuing a searing solo on the funky, Rhodes-infused "Ral and Tonto." Locke's memorable acoustic waltz, "Dear Life," caps this satisfying set. —CHRIS JISI