

MIKE POPE

Cold Truth Warm Heart

Cold Truth Warm Heart is an album full of big, adventurous modern jazz tunes by Mike Pope, a bassist's bassist admired by the likes of Victor Wooten and John Patitucci. The U of North Texas-trained, New York City-tested upright and electric player has settled in Maryland, but his recording session drew in a multi-regional who's who list of the baddest instrumentalists in jazz.

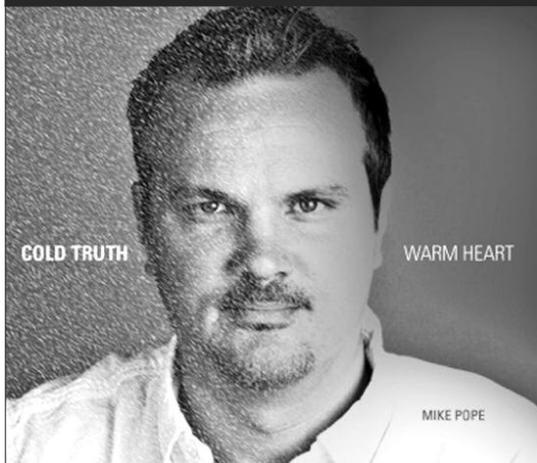
The first few tracks on the album are romps that show off the chops of Seamus Blake (tenor saxophone), Geoffrey Keezer (piano and Rhodes) and Joe Locke, an amazing vibraphone player I'm sad I've never heard before. "Shadow of a Doubt" is a nicely funky exploration. Both it and "Bare Minimum" feature some beautiful upright bass.

Pope's rearrangement of the Chopin masterpiece "Prelude in E Minor" is an exhibition of his skills on electric bass, a passionate take on a classic, pure, minor melody.

The spookiness of "Into the Ether" is the kind of electric jazz tune that hits the notes for me, restless for the first two minutes with a scattering of drums before Pope's lurching emergence and before the rest of the band drops in. for a drive-time tune par excellence. My only regret is that it's a six and a half minute track, instead of twenty or thirty minutes of riffing in the same vein. But I guess that's what they have a 'repeat' function. This is a track that wouldn't be out of place on the Flecktones' early great album *Three Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, if you swapped vibes for banjo.

Pope's rearrangement of the Chopin masterpiece "Prelude in E Minor" is an exhibition of his skills on electric bass, a passionate take on a classic, pure, minor melody. Hometown hero Alan Blackman lends his well-known piano talents.

CD REVIEW



www.mikepopejazz.com

"Cold Truth" picks back up with a warm, bouncing jam, "Ral and Tonto." Pope's electric work sets the table and Keezer's work on the Rhodes is an unhurried voyage that really throws down. His and Pope's solos are great examples of how jazz can thrash as hard as progressive rock or any genre out there.

"Dear Life," the album's closing statement, is a beautifully emotive track, not in the slightest soppy. Joe Locke's composition, a tribute to saxophonist Bob Berg, veers between eerie and soaring, gaining power with each measure, and giving a satisfying end to the ride.

The recording is proof of Pope's numerous talents, as a bassist, composer and arranger, but it's also a group portrait of jazz musicians at the top of their game.

— ALI BRECKMANN



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