



Khiov Music LP 43019
Bobby McFerrin: Beyond Words
Format: 2LPs 33rpm / gatefold sleeve

Manufacturer: Khiov Music
Original label: Blue Note
Release date: 26.06.2015

Creative vocalist Bobby McFerrin's return to Blue Note after a nearly ten-year absence indicates a possible desire for a return to improvised jazz, and in a way distancing himself from the classical works he had become increasingly associated with. Working again with pianist Chick Corea and producer Linda Goldstein, his 2002 album, "Beyond Words", is reminiscent of the other McFerrin/Corea collaborations ("Play", "The Mozart Sessions"), but somehow these mostly improvised works lack the spark that their previous partnerships have created. Aply backed by Corea's bright piano, Omar Hakim on drums, and Richard Bona on bass, the songs feel to be all the same texture for the most part, never reaching any kind of a peak throughout the album. "Beyond Words" is a moody and dark affair, with subtle layers of McFerrin's undulating vocals weaving in and out of the musical bed, but instead of sounding earthy and natural, the album is punctuated by synthesized instruments that pull the recordings dangerously close to smooth jazz territory. Still, it is an excellently performed and cleanly produced document of both McFerrin and Corea's abilities, ideal for gentle background textures on a night in alone.

Recording: at the Hit Factory, New York, and Lake of the Isles Studio, Minneapolis (USA)
Production: Linda Goldstein "Beyond Words" - Bobby McFerrin (voc, synth); Chick Corea (p, el-p); Keith Underwood (fl); Gil Goldstein (acc, synth, el-p); Richard Bona (b, g, perc); Omar Hakim (dr); Cyro Baptista (perc); Taylor McFerrin (vocal perc)