



Kirk Lightsey

Goodbye Mr. Evans

Evidence 22165

★★★★½

Still among the best-kept secrets in jazz, pianist Kirk Lightsey continues to record very tasteful, consistently strong albums. Warm and heartfelt, *Goodbye Mr. Evans* reaches standards set by Lightsey's role models, fellow Detroit pianists Tommy Flanagan and Hank Jones. Jimmy Heath's "A New Blue" illustrates Lightsey's knack for embracing an attractive melody, then reiterating and embellishing it over the swinging, seductive vamp laid down by drummer Famoudou Don Moye and bassist Tibor Elekes. Lightsey's playing is full of paradoxes: bluesy but elegant, and light but assertive. "Habiba," an original he's recorded frequently, is played at a mid-tempo groove with the same qualities plus more adventurous drumming from Moye.

The drummer's presence recalls the controlled aggression of his collaborations with Lightsey in the Leaders and the Leaders Trio. This performance may seem conventional to fans of Moye's work with the Art Ensemble of Chicago, but he manages to sound inventive and unpredictable without disrupting the flow and gracefulness of Lightsey's trio. The trio's reflective reading of Phil Woods' "Goodbye Mr. Evans" just about glows. Lightsey keeps the piece interesting over its length by varying moods through tension and release. That Lightsey continues to be overlooked reconfirms how difficult it's become to attain deserved recognition without the backing of a multinational entertainment conglomerate.

—Jon Andrews

Goodbye Mr. Evans—*A New Blue; In Your Own Sweet Way; From Chopin To Chopin; Medley: Freedom Jazz Dance, Pinocchio, Temptation, Giant Steps; Four In One; Habiba; Goodbye Mr. Evans.* (66:01)

Personnel—Lightsey, piano; Tibor Elekes, bass; Famoudou Don Moye, drums, percussion.