

**1) ALAN BLACKMAN/STEVEN BARKE,
SHADOWDANCE,
BB 32799.**

Phantom Flight / Shadowdance / Ruth / Mindwalk / Greasy Spoon / Christina / I Hear a Rhapsody / Will We Meet Again? 53:24.

Blackman, p; Barke, d; Tom Baldwin, b; Glen Cashman, saxes. 3/27/99, Bethesda, MD.

**2) SAM SHERRY & URSA MAJOR,
WE'LL SEE,
INVISIBLE MUSIC 2015.**

The Well / Giant Footprints / Beautiful as a Rose / Kids / G'night Again / Mutatis Mutandis / Back to Back / Earl's Pearls / It's Time. 56:02.

Sherry, b; Jason St. Pierre, saxes; Scott Reeves, tbn, alto flg; Steve Shapiro, vib; Mark Kleinhaut, g; Jan Van Voorst Van Beest, d. No recording date or place given.

Sherry is an exemplary leader on (2). He is one whose influence permeates his group, but he is never domineering in scope or reach. His bass technique is a pleasant amalgam of propulsive rhythmic energy and subtly nuanced sensitivity. Whether he's laying down a solid walking line or injecting enthusiastic slaps and strums via his elastic strings, Sherry always shows an easy modesty and restraint. Taking their leader's cue, his partners strike a similar balance across the pungently swinging program of post bop that serves as the group's favored fodder. Of all the players besides the leader, Shapiro is often the most pervasive and his luminescent vibes are the frequent focal point around which the other instruments revolve. His iridescent malleted lines blend in unison with Kleinhaut's scintillating strings and create a rhythmic tide, in concert with Sherry and Van Voorst Van Beest, for the horns to work melodic magic within. Most surprisingly these six players manage to gently push the envelope without any of the trappings of discord or dissonance. St. Pierre is the most rambunctious of the bunch, though even his harder toned phrases are still usually tempered with a lilting languidity. This disc is an enjoyable, if not particularly elaborate, listen and those who prefer their Jazz without a volatile edge will probably be pleased by the prospects here.

Blackman and Barke operate out of a similar bag on (1), favoring ear pleasing melody-driven tune structures and clearly defined head-solos progressions. The quartet they've convened works through the material with a skillful aplomb, but listening to their efforts is sometimes like being cloyed into submission by an innocuous family relative. They're obviously enthusiastic about their craft and demonstrate a respect for one another through consistently sensitive interplay. Where the chief problem surfaces is in the disarming sameness of their music, which frequently ends up sounding a bit too practiced, polished and familiar. Cashman cycles between his

