Bobby McFerrin - Spirityouall (2013)



01 – Everytime 02 – Swing Low 03 – Joshua 04 – Fix Me Jesus 05 – Woe 06 – I Shall Be Released 07 – Whole World 08 – Gracious 09 – 2515 10 – Wade 11 – Glory 12 – Jesus Makes It Good 13 – Rest Yes Indeed Personnel: Bobby McFerrin: vocals; Esperanza Spalding: bass, vocals (1, 2, 7, 11, 13); Larry Campbell: guitars; Gil Goldstein: keyboards; Charley Drayton: drums (1, 2, 7, 11, 13); Ali Jackson: drums (3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13); Larry Grenadier: bass (3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12).

Bobby McFerrin, Al Jarreau and Jon Hendricks are the most innovative jazz voices of the past 50 years. Our current subject, McFerrin, took the technical capabilities of the human voice, remolding them into the fantastic and delightful forms we recognise as his genius today. spirityouall is McFerrin's celebration of both his father, Robert McFerrin, Sr., the first African-American to sign a contract with the Metropolitan Opera Company and the American musical vernacular called the Spiritual.

McFerrin's father was also an historic interpreter of the American Negro Spiritual, having recorded "Deep River" and Other Classic Negro Spirituals in 1957 (which is curiously unavailable digitally or as a compact disc). The younger McFerrin resculpts three timeless pieces that appeared also on his father's release—"Every time I Feel the Spirit," "Swing Low Sweet Chariot" and "Fix Me Jesus"— making these time-tested songs shine like liquid mercury exploding. McFerrin takes old songs and new originals, even a Dylan tune, melding them in the organic fashion of 1990s Cassandra Wilson, only completing Wilson's evolution in concept and execution. This is fully realized music.

First, no song is allowed a "standard" treatment. No, not one of the thirteen songs here. McFerrin digs in the Delta Dirt with guitarist Larry Campbell's talents with dobro, slide guitar, steel guitar conjuring blues and deep country mojo on "Fix Me Jesus," "Whole World" and an

Eddie Son House "Death Letter" stomp on the singer's original take on Psalms, "25:15:" Blind Willie Johnson meets Tommy Johnson at the crossroads of canned heat and the Yazoo river. McFerrin transforms "Wade in the Water" into a steel-guitar rag jazz piece quite unlike anything else. Bob Dylan's "I Shall Be Released" has never been so transformed, sounding like it belongs to McFerrin and his father's spirit.

The riches that make up spirityouall cannot be overestimated. McFerrin is well-inspired and supported on this disc, where he really does something both unique and special. This is music that heals. ---C. Michael Bailey, allabout.jazz

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