Jack Dejohnette - Sound Travels (2012)

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1. Enter Here [02:24] 2. Salsa for Luisito [06:56] 3. Dirty Ground [04:49] 4. New Muse [06:06] 5. Sonny Light [05:40] 6. Sound Travels [01:43] 7. Oneness [05:59] 8. Indigo Dreamscapes [08:05] 9. Home [04:34]   [play](#)   Personnel: Jack DeJohnette - piano (1-7, 9), drums (2-6, 8), resonating bell (1), vocal (2), keyboards (3); Tim Ries - tenor saxophone (2, 3, 5, 8), soprano saxophone (3, 4); Ambrose Akinmusire - trumpet (2, 4, 5); Lionel Loueke - guitar (2, 3, 5, 6); Esperanza Spalding - bass (2-6, 8), vocal (2, 3); Luisito Quintero - percussion (2-8), vocal (2); Bruce Hornsby - vocal (3); Bobby McFerrin - vocal (7); Jason Moran - piano (8).

In his sixth decade as a professional musician, Jack DeJohnette has established himself as a musical chameleon. He's led bands and recorded and performed with an array of jazz legends as well as funk and pop artists. DeJohnette has even made new age music listenable with Peace Time and Music in the Key of Om (the latter won him a Grammy). And he has always cultivated and acted on his deep, abiding interest in indigenous musics from Latin America and Africa. Sound Travels is his first recording of new material since 2009's Music We Are. True to form, DeJohnette, who plays drums and piano here, ranges widely. The disc begins with the brief "Enter Here," a grounded yet ambitious offering with the sound of a resonating bell that gives way to DeJohnette's lilting solo piano. "Salsa for Luisto" features the percussionist Luisto Quintero playing grooved-out, modern Afro-Cuban son. Esperanza Spalding is the upright bassist in the band, and on this track, she sings alongside Ambrose Akinmusire's trumpet and Lionel Loueke's guitar. DeJohnette plays piano and drums. This salsa is of the earthier yet breezier Caribbean variety. It's lovely. Just as quickly, things shift into down-home New Orleans-style funky blues with Tim Ries on soprano and tenor saxophones. Bruce Hornsby appears on vocals singing about not surrendering in the face of disaster more soulfully than on any of his own records. Loueke's unique guitar style makes this track sound more like the Band than Allen Toussaint, though Wardell Quezergue's ghost inhabits the horn chart. "New Music" is modern, modal post-bop with Middle Eastern overtones. It features fine traded solos by Ries on soprano and Akinmusire. Township jazz crossed with Latin groove is the bedrock for "Sonny Light," with Loueke's lyric solo being the tune's centerpiece as DeJohnette finds a perfect space to comp behind him and enhance the guitar's presence. The two horns and Quintero's hand
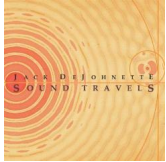
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drums weave a wonderful, rhythmic lyricism around the pair. The title track is an exercise in rhythm from DeJohnette, Loueke, Quintero, and Spalding (who really drives this track and shines brightly on the album as a whole). "Oneness" is a sparse and moving ballad played by DeJohnette and Quintero, backing vocalist Bobby McFerrin. The song feels deeply indebted to Milton Nascimento's excellent mid-'70s work. The set's longest cut is "Indigo Dreamscapes," a breezy, midtempo, fingerpopping Latin number. DeJohnette's piano work alongside Ries' tenor create an irresistible harmonic progression even when they move the tune toward straight-ahead jazz, then walk it back. The closer, "Home," is another languid, crystalline solo piano piece that is the bookend to "Enter Here." It's quiet, reverent, warm, and inviting, and it pays an indirect homage to Abdullah Ibrahim's South African style. Sound Travels is a current, understated, well-disciplined glimpse into DeJohnette's current musical world view, which is worth celebrating for its own sake. ---Thom Jurek, Rovi

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