Charnett Moffett: The Bridge - Solo Bass Works (2013)

01 Caravan (Duke Ellington, Irving Mills, Juan Tizol) 02 Eleanor Rigby (John Lennon/Paul McCartney) 03 Black Codes (Wynton Marsalis) 04 Fragile (Sting) 05 Haitian Fight Song (Charles Mingus) 06 Kalengo (Charnett Moffett) 07 Bow Song (Charnett Moffett) 08 Joshua Fought The Battle Of Jericho / Rolling In The Deep (Adele Adkins, Paul Epworth, Traditional) 09 Skip Hop (Charnett Moffett) 10 The Slump (Tony Williams) 11 Monk Medley ['Round Midnight / Well You Needn't / Rhythm-A-Ning] (Bernie Hanighen, Charles "Cootie" Williams, Thelonious Monk) 12 Oversun (Charnett Moffett) 13 Swinging Etude (Charnett Moffett) 14 Walk Spirit, Talk Spirit (McCoy Tyner) 15 Truth (Charnett Moffett) 16 The Bridge [Solo Bass Works](Charnett Moffett) 17 Nature Boy (Eden Ahbez) 18 Things Ain't What They Used To Be (Mercer Ellington, Ted Parsons) 19 All Blues (Miles Davis) 20 Free Your Mind (Charnett Moffett) Charnett Moffett – Bass

The sound of Charnett Moffett's bass resonates almost instantly straight to the depths of the soul. Over his career, Moffett has played in a tremendous variety of settings and explored seemingly every avenue, alley, and obscure landscape of both the upright and electric bass. Now with his first solo bass CD, The Bridge, audiences can experience Moffett's artisanship in its most concentrated form. Comprised of 20 pieces, The Bridge covers a lot of territory, acting as a portrait of Moffett's musical experience. Included on the album are touchstones to the many stages of his long career, from his early work with Wynton Marsalis to his run with the Manhattan Jazz Quartet, to his explosive experiments as a bandleader, as well as his partnership with McCoy Tyner. However, though touching on these various aspects of his development, it is not a simple march through time, but instead a distillation of the various components into a captivating whole.

Moffett begins with a blistering take on "Caravan," followed immediately by "Eleanor Rigby" which in Moffett's hands undergoes a kind of sublimation that exposes the devastating salience of the original's commentary on the human condition. This ability to pair down and purify represents one of Moffett's signature abilities which he applies throughout The Bridge. A second

powerful example is his brief 44-second rendition of "Nature Boy." Boldly approaching this classic, Moffett inverts the more usual jazz methodology of expanding on a tune's basic parts to instead render it into its most essential, emotive elements.

The remaining 18 selections continue this pattern, tapping both icons of the jazz repertoire, like Charles Mingus' "Haitian Fight Song" and a medley of Thelonious Monk works, and pop tunes like Sting's "Fragile." Moffett also contributes 8 original compositions that provide some additional standout moments, such as the Middle Eastern-themed piece "Kalengo" on which Moffett integrates pizzicato and bowed techniques in a virtuoso display. In fact, Moffett's bow work on this and several other pieces, including Miles Davis' "All Blues" and the closing, electric-tinged "Free Your Mind," represent some of the most redolent passages on the album.

No recording can capture the distinct and uncannily haunting sound of Moffett's tone when experienced live, but The Bridge is an exceptionally actualized statement delivered by the practiced hand of a master during a resurgence of his creative powers. (It should be noted that The Bridge will be followed closely by an ensemble album, and was previewed by a marathon run of solo performances in New York.)

In the end, as impressive as Moffett's technical facility on the bass and compositional talents are, it is his emotive clarity, the ability to cut to the core, that ultimately captures the imagination and moves the listener's inner being. His is a rare capacity to reach out—sometimes with only one perfectly articulated note—to touch the deepest aspects of our spirits and carry us forward.
---Franz A. Matzner, allaboutjazz.com

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