



July/August/September 2015

By Jerome Wilson

CD REVIEW: NEW RELEASE

ARTIST: CHARLES MCPHERSON

TITLE: THE JOURNEY

LABEL: CAPRI 74136

TUNES: The Decathexis From Youth (For Cole) / Elena / Spring Is Here / Manhattan Nocturne / Au Private / I Should Care / The Journey / Tami's Tune / Bud Like. 54:56.

PERSONNEL: McPherson, as; Keith Oxman, ts; Chip Stephens, p; Ken Walker, b; Todd Reid, d. 4/21/14, 5/19/14.

Charles McPherson, a long-serving altoist so deep into the Charlie Parker school that he famously replicated Parker's solos for the movie "Bird". This recording pairs him with tenor saxophonist Keith Oxman in a quintet format. The two sound good together whether they are playing themes in unison or doing gliding solo turns. Their up-tempo work on "Decathexis", "The Journey" and "Spring Is Here" is clean and brisk and Oxman has a robust sound with a Coltrane influence that contrasts well with McPherson's heady avian flights. "Elena" is a graceful ballad and "Manhattan Nocturne" sports a pretty, tropical theme with the saxes moaning and sighing together nicely and Chip Stephens playing fine romantic piano. The one Parker theme present, "Au Private" is taken at a slightly slow tempo before McPherson plays his most tangled and ambitious solo of the set while Oxman gracefully bounds through the changes and Stephens digs his own funky groove.

Beside their work together each saxophonist gets a solo feature. "I Should Care" is a delicate but sensual duet for McPherson and Stephens while Oxman's piece, "Tami's Tune" is a soulful jaunt for tenor, bass and drums that lets Ken Walker and Todd Reid shine against Oxman's molten tenor. This CD is solid, lovely work from a legendary musician who can still bring it.