

KIRK LIGHTSEY TRIO
Goodbye Mr. Evans



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Evidence

As bop pianists go, Lightsey is a pro's pro who hails from the so-called "Detroit school," combining crisp, lyrical lines with tight, intricate chordal combinations in his solo approach. The easy way to analyze his work is to compare him with fellow Motor City pianists Roland Hanna and Barry Harris, but Lightsey's voice has become more distinctive and individual since he's been living in France. "A New Blue" starts things off with Lightsey echoing Ahmad Jamal during a Jimmy Heath blues vamp, while "Chopin From Chopin" is a wonderful classical adaptation that transforms a waltz melody into a brooding, evocative ballad. The most daring track in the album is a medley in which the pianist somehow manages to combine Coltrane's "Giant Steps," Wayne Shorter's "Pinocchio," and Eddie Harris's "Freedom Jazz Dance" into a coherent whole, while bassist Tibor Elekes provides strong melodic support and Famoudou Don Moye shines in an extended drum solo. Despite the sophistication of the playing, Lightsey remains an extremely accessible and marvelously inventive player who definitely deserves a wider audience.

- BOB MCCULLOUGH