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By Jerome Wilson

Collage

Imani and First Prayer

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Awo / Out Of This World / Ceora / Blues For The World / Ta-Ta-Te / You Are My Light / Speak Low / Naima / Journey's Path / Imagine. 56:55 .*

Imani, vcl, perc; Jon Ozment, p, kbds; Vinny Valentino, Bruce Middle, g; Pepe Gonzáles, b; Rd Youngs, d; Sam Turner, perc; Cris Vadala, ts, ss; Tommy Williams, tpt; Yacub Addy, Laryeh Addy, tsweisin drums, vcl.*

This group mixes African, Caribbean and Latin rhythms in with mainstream Jazz to varying degrees of effectiveness. Sometimes their work comes out with a light, supper club texture like a version of Lee Morgan's "Ceora" with a springy Caribbean go-go beat. Other tracks carry much more weight, like searing Latin Jazz versions of "Out of this World" and "Speak Low," and "Blues For The World," an amazing slice of Mississippi delta blues with shimmering slide guitar. Singer Imani has a powerful and eclectic voice that makes the lightweight work palable and is really compelling on the heavier work. This is a very listenable and occasionally powerhouse set.