



Alyssa Allgood
Exactly Like You
 CELLAR MUSIC 050418
 ★★☆☆½

An impressive pop-oriented singer based in Chicago, Alyssa Allgood won a 2014 Down Beat Student Music Award in the Undergraduate Vocal Jazz Soloist category. Two years later, she recorded her debut, *Out Of The Blue*, which found her not only singing well, but introducing her lyrics to songs by Hank Mobley, Joe Henderson, Wayne Shorter and Lee Morgan.

Now 24, Allgood comes roaring out of the gate on her second album, singing with enthu-

Leyla McCalla
The Capitalist Blues
 JAZZ VILLAGE 570154
 ★★☆☆½

Despite not being originally from the area, Leyla McCalla's stylistically diverse musical development—spanning classical education to folk songwriting with the Carolina Chocolate Drops—has helped her blend with New Orleans' rich culture. And *The Capitalist Blues* is demonstrable proof. A slow, swaying opener featuring McCalla's tenor banjo, introduces the album's overarching theme of capitalism, while highlighting her ensemble's personality through impassioned blues performances. Though *The Capitalist Blues* works to make socio-political statements, less activism-anchored tracks, like "Me And My Baby," provide lyrical and musical refuge between revelations. Overlapping saxophones, trumpets, fiddle, accordion and drums usher in the spontaneity for which NOLA is so well known.

Yet, the album also is an exercise in McCalla's own cultural research. Weighty territory like Haitian Creole vernacular, political discord, classist disconnect and humanitarian crises are keystones. And while the album serves as a beautiful milestone in McCalla's musical life, its advocacy-driven narratives also make it an astute self-contained recording, one that requires no

siasm and power during an uptempo version of "Exactly Like You." Joined by organist Dan Chase, guitarist Kyle Asche and drummer Greg Artry, she's very much in her element, featuring an impressive range while vocalizing in a conversational style that's sometimes way behind the beat.

Allgood stretches her repertoire a bit here with the inclusion of two originals, a Michael Jackson hit ("Rock With You") turned into soul jazz, and a tune by Stevie Wonder. But most rewarding are her renditions of jazz standards. Allgood sings her lyrics to Morgan's "Hocus Pocus" (a song based on "Mean To Me") that finds her essaying the occasionally wide intervals effortlessly and scatting creatively for two choruses. She interprets Thelonious Monk's "Ask Me Now" with quiet emotion, sounds joyful on "The More I See You," interacts with drummer Artry on "Alone Together" and gives "Darn That Dream" a medium-tempo treatment.

While Allgood mostly sounds at her best on hotter material, her surprising version of "Yardbird Suite," here rendered as a medium-slow ballad, is convincing and offers the prospect of an interesting future. —*Scott Yanow*

Exactly Like You: Exactly Like You; Hocus Pocus; Rock With You; Ask Me Now; By My Side; The More I See You; If It's Magic; Alone Together; Waltz; Darn That Dream; Yardbird Suite. (59:35)

Personnel: Alyssa Allgood, vocals; Dan Chase, organ; Kyle Asche, guitar; Greg Artry, drums.

Ordering info: cellarlive.com



prior relationship with the bandleader's work to glean timely lessons from. —*Kira Grunenberg*

The Capitalist Blues: The Capitalist Blues; Money Is King; Lavi Vye Neg; Penha; Heavy As Lead; Me And My Baby; Aleppo; Mize Pa Dou; Oh My Love; Ain't No Use; Settle Down. (44:47)

Personnel: Leyla McCalla, vocals, tenor banjo, electric guitar; Shannon Powell (1), Chris Davis (5, 6, 7), drums; Carl LeBlanc, tenor banjo (1); Ben Polcer, piano, trumpet, glockenspiel; Will Smith, trumpet (1); Bruce Brackman, clarinet (1); Paul Robertson, trombone (1); Jon Gross, tuba (1); Free Feral, viola (2); Jimmy Horn, electric guitar, electric bass, whiskey bottle; Daniel Tremblay, guitar (2, 10); Richard "Fan Fan" Louis, percussion, vocals; Logan Schuttis, percussion; Joe Ashlar, organ (5); Jason Mingledorff, tenor, baritone saxophone (6); Andre Michot, lap steel guitar; Corey Ledet, accordion, drums (9); James Singleton, bass (10); Louis Michot, fiddle (9); Ashlee Michot, 'tit fer (9); Beniste Belony, Peterson "Ti Pitti" Joseph, James Carrier, percussion, vocals (11); Taxi Driver Man (3); Topsy Chapman (5, 6); Jolynda Phillips (5, 6); Yolanda Windsay (5); Junior Lamarre (11); Steeve Valcourt (11); Luckson Colobry (11); Jonas Attis (11), vocals.

Ordering info: pias.com



Jacob Collier with Metropole Orkest
Djesse, Vol. 1
 HAJANGA/DECCA/GEFFEN
 ★★☆☆½

Though Jacob Collier describes *Djesse*—a multidisc project—as a single album, but four individual records, any sense of fragmentation at the end of *Vol. 1* is washed away by the bandleader's festival-flavored rendition of "All Night Long," less an album closer than a pause before a much longer, indepth conversation.

Metropole Orkest's foundation significantly directs *Djesse's* expansive nature, the symphonic supplementation shining on "Overture," its sweeping string parts and pentatonic melodic passages eliciting visions of a bustling Southeast Asian metropolis. Still, the album is a manifestation of Collier's experiences, brought to life with iconic collaborators like gnawa musician Hamid El Kasri, Take 6, and incognito vocal cameos from Quincy Jones and Steve Vai. The bandleader's own versatility can't be undersold even in that company, as Collier contributes everything from guitar to harmonium and beyond. His compositions display ostentatious character throughout, but with a shifting tone, each piece eventually feels like an extravagant adventure. Just contrasting "Overture" with album opener "Home Is" illuminates *Djesse's* fantastical breadth. However, it's that same severe variation—tempo, instrumentation, fundamental compositional form—that provides the album with a sense of cohesion, potentially setting up listeners for the next installment of the journey. —*Kira Grunenberg*

Djesse, Vol. 1: Home Is; Overture; With The Love In My Heart; Ocean Wide; Canyon Deep; Djesse; Everlasting Motion; Every Little Thing She Does Is Magic; Once You; All Night Long. (53:16)

Personnel: Jacob Collier, percussion, keyboards, organ, percussion, electric bass, guitar, nose flute, vocals; Hans Vroomans, piano (2, 5); Robin Mullarkey, electric bass (4, 7); Metropole Orkest, orchestra; Suzie Collier, violin (8), vocals (3, 9); Hamid El Kasri, geumbri, vocals (6); Troy Miller, drums (7, 9); Voces8, Take 6; Ella Collier, Sophie Collier, Laura Mvula, The Aeolians of Oakwood University, June Lee, Clark Beckham, Jeff Coffin, Adam Fell, Alfredo Pasquel, Ben Bloomberg, Ben Bram, Christian Euman, Daniel Rotem, Emmy Ross, Erin Bentlage, Gustaf Downs, India Carney, Michael Miller, Quincy Jones, Shanying Cui, Steve Vai, Abdelhak Bounhar, Abderrazak Moustaqim, Wahid Boudjeltia, Moulay Abdelkrim Alaalaoui, vocals.

Ordering info: jacobcollier.com