

CADENCE

VIRGINIA SCHENCK [voc], who also goes by the stage name VA, has released AMINATA MOSEKA [Airborne Ecstasy ae1113]. This is an Abbey Lincoln tribute and a good one. Lincoln's lyrics did not primarily deal with moon in June but were often pointed lessons of life. Half the success of this CD could be just for just the 12 Lincoln [71:08] tunes/lyrics [Blue Monk is a Monk tune but Lincoln wrote the lyrics). But Schenck is key here and in her gentle approach, she brings brings Abbey's songbook to life. One can't help hearing Lincoln and her very original delivery but Schenck's approach welcomes the listener in a sweeter approach without compromising Lincoln's lyrics. The power of Abbey Lincoln is more and more being discovered by jazz artists, it is a rich area to investigate and not to be taken lightly. Appropriate backing comes from Kevin Bales [p], Rodney Jordan [b], Marlon Patton [drm], and on one track Kebbi Williams [as]. On "Caged Bird", Schenck has added Maya Angelou's powerful poem, Shaker, Why Don't You Sing?. Recorded 8/14&15/16. VIRGINIA SCHENCK's previous release, INTERIOR NOTIONS [Airborne Ecstasy ae1112] was recorded in January [9,10,11,22] 2014 with the same trio as the Lincoln tribute, plus Kinah Boto Ayah [perc] and Kevin Spears [kalimba and background vocals]. This is made up of 7 standards and the title track, which is an improv [61:21]. Interior Notions is a free improv interesting work like lyrics over nice kalimba playing. "Throw It Away" is again sung here but with a bit more bite, in fact this CD is a bit more theatrical and excellent in parts. Low point is "Nature Boy" which opens with a too long listen to nature sounds which is followed by a too long [15:51] development of the song. This gives the musicians a chance to stretch out and while I appreciate making an exotic mountain out of a mole hill I remained unmoved. On the other hand versions of "Midnight Sun" and "Poor Wayfaring Stranger" are exceptional. Schenck has written liners for each track. VIRGINIA SCHENCK's first recording VA [Airborne Ecstasy 1111] confirms what the latter two Recordings suggest, that this is an exceptional singer: jazz singer. In addition it is again evident, from the 11 tunes [58:03] chosen, that Schenck looks for songs with greater meaning than moon in June. This recording [8/2011] again uses the same trio support plus Melvin Jones [tpt] on one tune [When I Fall In Love]. Again she references Abbey Lincoln for 2 tracks [Learning How To Listen & The Music Is The Magic] and contributes one original [Compromise] that is quite nice. On "Better Than Anything" she adds some extra lyrics. What comes through in her delivery is Schenck's believability. It looks like Schenck records about every 2 years, but don't wait another two years, pick up any of her 3 recording and anticipate the forth. This is a compelling jazz vocalist.

— Robert Rusch, *Cadence Magazine*