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Shane Nichols



Local World. Steve Hunter (ABC Jazz) 9 stars: Sydney-based bassist of renown Steve Hunter has been threatening to make an album of this calibre for a while now – he has a clutch of discs to his own name and has appeared on many more that befit his standing in the local jazz elite as an electric bass virtuoso. Hunter's

writing is an equal part of his musical identity and this album finally pulls all his creative talents together. The fusion jazz of the '60s and '70s is the wellspring from which he draws and extends his own direction. That is obvious in the electric charge of the music but explicitly so in the opening track, *Kiss The Rain*, which is based on a vocal riff by Manolo Badrena on Weather Report's '70s track, *Rumba Rain*. There is an intriguing scope in Hunter's writing - from the quasi-gospel incantation of *Pray (In Your Own Way)* - rendered by vocalist Tina Harrod who puts the fire into every nuance - to the Portuguese narration by Bianca Rosa on *Savant*. Along the way there is a thrilling mix of first-class jazz exponents such as Phil Slater on trumpet, Matt McMahon on Rhodes piano, Nick McBride on drums, Frank Hevia (percussion), and - most importantly - guitarist James Muller, whose every recording seems more of a revelation than the last - and he's made quite a few. This extraordinary player now shows an adept hand at slide guitar among his other riveting talents. The man defies categories - he simply surprises the listener all the time. With a cast like this to do his material justice, Hunter has everything in place this time.