

Canadafrica Where's The One? Borealis/Universal

Sub-titled 'Canadian Roots Meets African Roots', this latest entry into the cross culture recordings list features just Mike Stevens' virtuoso harmonica and Ghanaian Okaidja Afroso on voice and various, mostly African, instruments. What strikes one immediately is the proficiency of both, no matter the style: Afroso sings like Bukka White on "Mercurachrome Blues" while playing a type of drum called a cajón and Stevens' harp sounds completely appropriate on any of the African songs. That Afroso can sing in English is a definite plus and his Mississippi John Hurt singing style on "You Ain't No Good" a delight. "Like A Little Bird" could go immediately into the Ken Whiteley songbook, although all the songs here are by the duo. "Just A Boy" is a major work - written through the eyes of an African boy soldier, it features Afroso on acoustic guitar. "Where's The One?" answers the musical question with a masterful display of shifting time signatures, Afroso playing a gourd. Two songs feature a Ghanaian instrument known as a gyil, a wooden xylophone. The combination with the harmonica is most attractive. What Stevens is able to accomplish with his harmonica is worth the price of the disc all by itself and what Canadafrica is able to do together is simply astounding. The CD release party is at the Lula Lounge, Wednesday, December 11 @ 8pm with the Whiteley Brothers opening. Should be quite a night! The web site is www.borealisrecords.com. Before closing, congratulations go to Mike Stevens, who has just received the prestigious Estelle Klein Award for his contributions to our Folk Music community.

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