

# Jazz Journal

By Dave Jones

John Beasley, Darryl Jones, Ndugu Chancler - *3 Brave Souls* - 4\*

I first enjoyed the decidedly funky, Herbie Hancock influenced keyboard playing of John Beasley on his 1992 debut *Cauldron*, an album influenced by late period Miles Davis material (Beasley played with Miles in the late 80s), and more recently on his 2008 album *Letter To Herbie* (a tribute to the aforementioned Hancock). *3 Brave Souls* is a **beautifully recorded and mixed** self-titled debut album by a trio where Beasley is joined by Darryl Jones and Ndugu Chancler, whose respective credits read like a who's who of the past few decades in popular music.

The compositions here, penned largely by Beasley and Chancler, with contributions by Jones and the impressive guest Sy Smith, are in funk, soul and jazz crossover territory, and the album sounds much as you would expect from this trio of seasoned session players with their musical backgrounds from New Orleans and Chicago, and their roots in funk and soul music. In terms of musical arrangements, **Beasley** appropriately utilizes an array of **classic keyboard sounds, often to very subtle effect.**

The album's jazz sensibilities are most apparent in the funky opener, and also from around the middle of the album onwards where Beasley (with Chancler adding vibes solo and lead lines) and guest baritone saxophonist Bob Sheppard stretch out over *Ayala* and *Nail it Down*. **Bassist Jones** provides **typically nimble, melodic bass lead and solo lines** on *Ayala* and *Ubiquitous*, while towards the close of the album, the trio with trombonist Francisco Torres and Leon Mobley on djembe nods in the direction of Fela Kuti's Afrobeat on *Yabis*.