

BPR Recommends

**Maurizio Rolli
& The A.M.P. Big Band**
*Moodswings: A Tribute to Jaco
Pastorius* [Wide Sound;
www.mauriziorolli.com]

This ambitious 70-minute undertaking by talented Italian bassist/arranger Rolli is aptly named. Many of the 11 Jaco or Jaco-associated covers begin with close-to-the-cuff recreations—only to spin off into some of the most brilliant re-interpretations of Jaco's music to date.

The opening "Donna Lee Jam" is a hearty duet with Michael Manring on his fretless Zon and Rolli on upright, while "Three Views of a Secret" varies solely by the presence of vocalist Diana Torto in harmonica player Toots Thielemans's role. Things heat up with "Teentown"; Rolli ably apes Jaco on fretless, but his big band chimes in with some cool curves. Guitarist



Mike Stern guests on his haunting Jaco-dedicated ballad "Wing and a Prayer," benefiting from Rolli's cinematic string and horn arrangement.

Rolli returns to his upright for a solo reading of "Continuum" that builds into lush motifs and reharmonizations being tossed about by the orchestra and Torto. "Invitation" gets an Afro-Cuban groove and vibrant new colors. The sweeping "Portrait of Lucy" borrows fleetingly from "Portrait of Tracy." Most fascinating, however, is "Havona." Stock at the start—though fattened by horns and a Stern solo—the piece arrives at Jaco's legendary solo. There, Rolli ingeniously spreads the well-known bass phrases around to different sections of the orchestra. With his basses,

Rolli shows his love and respect for Jaco; more important, his arranger's pen shows the depth and range of Jaco's music.

—Chris Jull