

## Mp3 Steve Million - Poetic Necessities



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My music consists of original melodic jazz compositions as well as interpretations and/or arrangements of jazz standards. 10 MP3 Songs JAZZ: Bebop Details: STEVE MILLION BIO A SINGLE EARLY EXPOSURE TO JAZZ stands out as the origin of all that has followed in Steve Million's career as a jazz pianist. In the early 60s, Million's parents took him to a dance at Kemper Military Academy in their hometown of Boonville, Missouri, to hear Count Basie. Basie quickly noticed the skinny kid looking up at him from the edge of the stage and invited him to sit with him at the piano. On breaks, he took Million's hand as he mingled with the crowd, and even took him backstage to meet the rest of the band. "In retrospect, it was quite remarkable that this great man of jazz wanted to spend his breaks with a strange little kid. I experienced such a feeling of welcome from Basie. That night was like an invitation into his world of music. It marked the beginning of my serious consideration of a future as a musician." By the time Million graduated from high school he was singularly focused on music. As his high school offered no formal music programs, he taught himself blues and boogie-woogie, composing his own songs and improvising. His parents recognized his talent and agreed to send him to North Texas State University. After a year at NTSU he realized how restricted he was by his lack of a traditional background in classical and jazz music. He moved to Kansas City where he attended the University of Missouri. There he studied classical piano, composition, and the more formal elements of music. Million ended his studies after three years to pursue a full time career as a performance musician that began as anything but full time. Million started out playing blues piano. Other musicians, noting his songwriting abilities, pointed him in the direction of Kansas City's great jazz instructor, John Elliot. Million began four years of study with Elliot in 1977. During this time he began to work at jazz clubs in the city and put together his first band. Steve Cardenas, a local guitar player interested in forming an original jazz project, soon approached him. Ron

Vincent was selected as drummer and Greg Whitfield as the bass player. This group, called Four Friends, was a turning point for Million. It was the first time he heard his songs performed in a truly unique way by great and adventurous musicians. The band also began a collaboration and friendship between Cardenas, Vincent, and Million that still endures. In the early 80s, Million moved to New York with Ron Vincent. With a primary musical focus on his own compositions, he was encouraged to learn more standard repertoire by those he played with. "That advice turned out to be a great thing for me. I began a disciplined approach to practice where I simply played and memorized standards. Because of my experiences in New York, I become realistic about myself as a professional musician." Steve moved back to Kansas City in 1983 where he immediately landed a weekly six-night solo piano job playing standards. The following year Million joined the Ida McBeth group, reuniting with his friend and collaborator Steve Cardenas. McBeth's band played everything from Million's and Cardenas's original tunes to Jazz, R B, and Blues. Within months Million became the band's musical director. In 1988 Million moved to Chicago. Soon after arriving he became a semi-finalist in the Thelonious Monk Piano Competition. A great experience for Million, it further shaped his musical goals. During the piano competition, he was introduced to Mike Kocour. The pair formed the band Monk's Dream with Mike on organ, Steve on piano and Robert Shy on drums. The group was well known in Chicago for its daring interpretations of Monk tunes in an unusual format. Having first been struck by Monk's recordings while at NTSU, Million had invested much of his time studying the musician's songs and piano techniques. His work with Monk's Dream gained him recognition as a major interpreter of Thelonious Monk's music. They performed on the main stage at the Chicago Jazz festival in 1991. In 1994 Million felt the time was right to make his first recording for release. He contacted Vincent in New York, who assisted with lining up the all-New York band envisioned for the project. Million began writing and organizing the music in the fall of '94 that would become the CD "Million to One", released on Palmetto records. The band consisted of Randy Brecker on trumpet/flugel horn, Chris Potter on sax, Michael Moore on bass, and co-producer Ron Vincent on drums. The CD gained national attention and a fourstar rating in Downbeat in addition to universal rave reviews. Million followed this release with "Thanks a Million" in 1996 (4&1/2 stars in Downbeat), featuring the same band. "Truth Is" was released in 1999 and featured Dick Oatts (instead of Potter) on sax, and his old friend Steve Cardenas (now living in NYC) on guitar. With each new release Million's fame as a unique jazz stylist and composer grew. 2003 WAS A BANNER YEAR for Million. He released his first piano trio

recording, "Poetic Necessities" to rave reviews. For the first time he featured his working trio in Chicago, with Dave Marr on bass and long time friend and collaborator Tim Davis on drums. Million was also the featured musician and co-producer of Thelonious Moog's "Yes, We Didn't", an electronic music recording that defies categorization. Bill Milkowski called it "a rare hoot for Monk aficionados and neophytes alike." The year rounded out with Million playing the piano and organ on Jim Gailloreto's release, "The Insider." Million composed the song "Mercurial" especially for this CD. In addition, to his recording and performing career Million has become a sought after jazz piano teacher and clinician. He teaches jazz piano at Benedictine University and at Merit School. He is highly regarded for his unique approach to jazz education. Steve Million is preparing to record his second trio CD this year (2004). He has also started another collaboration with Joe "Guido" Welsh (the other half of Thelonious Moog) to create a unique recording that will feature unusual combinations of instruments and the production skills of Welsh.

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