



# blitz - the rock and roll magazine

for thinking people

## POINT LESS - Ola Onabule (Rugged Ram)

"I'm gonna stand on my own two feet".

So sang beloved composer, vocalist and Stepney, East London native Kenny Lynch in his monster classic 1964 H.M.V. label single of the same name. Lynch's release was a landmark prototype among a series of like minded singles to follow, including the Impressions' *We're Rolling On* and Les McCann and Eddie Harris' *Compared To What*, among others.

A half century later (and buoyed by the benefit of added perspective), Islington, London's Ola Onabule takes the recurring mission statement a step further with his most recent release, *Point Less*. From the double entendre implications of the title through the richly varied musical tapestry evidenced in the fourteen selections therein, Onabule champions the not so paradoxical approach of driving the point home through seeming detachment.

Detachment in that by emphasizing a rich tapestry of musical styles (evidenced most strikingly in the jazz / vocal harmony interplay of *And Yet*), Onabule draws the listener in through compelling performance; drawing immediate attention away from the subject matter in the process. By the time the listener is able to pause and reflect, the first impression made by his delivery supersedes any potential misgivings and / or dissent with respect to content.

To be certain, if there were any such reservations, they would be borne not out of any lack of credence from the subject matter at hand (which ranges from suggestions of hypocrisy in the title track to a successive decline in optimism, as showcased in *Conceive It*), but in the potential for impasse suggested by the artist's unwaveringly upbeat and technically savvy delivery.

To wit, long time Count Basie Orchestra vocalist Joe Williams was occasionally taken to task for his signature track, *Every Day I Have The Blues*, in that his relentlessly optimistic execution of the piece belied its relatively somber subject matter. In turn, Onabule's seeming prioritization of technique and demeanor could suggest to some that the subject matter at hand is of secondary importance.

But while lyrical content is not a one size fits all default in terms of music appreciation, in Onabule's case, the potential impasse is easily resolved by revisiting the proceeds in greater detail after an initial listen. To be certain, Onabule even provides pertinent points of entry to that effect along the way, typified by the Johnny Mathis-like overtones of the opening bars of the otherwise thought provoking *Ballad Of The Star Crossed*.

In other words, *Point Less* is an album for thinking people, who appreciate a nod to the familiar that nonetheless consistently challenges the listener to take the appropriate (and inevitable) steps to the next level. And in that respect, Onabule is anything but pointless.