



DIANNE REEVES

Art and Survival

EMI E2-28494 • 1994, 70:00

Performance ★ ★

Sound Quality ★ ★ ★ ★

“Endangered Species” is a fine track on *Art & Survival*, the new Dianne Reeves album. It features a striking, mostly a cappella intro, a strong rhythmic beat, and proud, forthright lyrics. Unfortunately, this song is the exception.

Most of *Art and Survival* is given over to more placid songs of spiritual strength. While “Endangered Species,” a tirade against the mistreatment of women, is searingly specific, the other songs tend to be vaguely uplifting, as on “Anthem,” where she sings “You’re gonna make it, you’ve got the power/ Hold on and live your life with dignity.” Noble sentiments, certainly, but not terribly interesting.

Much of her singing and the slightly funky jazz arrangements are equally unfocused. She does manage some intensity on parts of a deconstructed “Body and Soul” and the Abbey Lincoln closer “Bird Alone.” Still, it’s not enough: The new-found insight Reeves speaks about may be good for survival, but confusion and anger make for better art.

—Michael Giltz