

More Singers, More Singing

Reviewed by Tom Pierce

Last year, I had the pleasure of hearing one of the acknowledged Piano masters, the late Tommy Flanagan, nicely supported by Peter Washington on Bass & Albert "Tootie" Heath on Drums at the Jazz Standard (116 E. 27 St. in NYC). Pianists & others in the business will remember him as Ella Fitzgerald's accompanist of choice for many years.

He played a wonderful set of varied Jazz and Great American Songbook (GAS) standards, including songs by Gershwin, Jerome Kern as well as originals. His infectious & spirited swinging, consistently fine taste and ceaseless flow of ideas that he is renowned for, were much in evidence. But for me the quality most enjoyable was his "touch", which created a sound that was so bright & uplifting I found myself smiling throughout the set.

For those interested in sampling his work via the various Internet vendors, I'd recommend (among many items available), "Sea Changes" or some of the Ella CD's he is on.

Tenor Saxes Play "Ballads"

I have long been a huge fan (as I'm sure many others here are) of how passionately melodic great Tenor Sax players can play ballads, including among many - Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, Ben Webster, Gene Ammons, Stan Getz, Zoot Sims, Sonny Rollins & my personal favorite - John Coltrane (cf. "Ballads" & "John Coltrane & Johnny Hartman," as good a male vocal recording as exists, IMHO).

For me, the Tenor Sax (in the right hands) had just the right balance between power and tenderness to produce an especially compelling sound on ballads. All three of these compilations, by musicians who sadly are no longer with us, are on the Blue Note label and are culled primarily from various dates in the 60's. As those who are familiar with these gentleman would correctly assume, these songs are NOT syrupy "Mood music", but stimulating pleasant jazz versions of these great songs performed in the normal Quartet / Quintet settings these players usually employed at that time.

DEXTER GORDON: Dam That Dream, Don't Explain, I'm A Fool To Want You, You've Changed, Willow Weep For Me. Guess I'll Hang My Tears Out To Dry, Body And Soul.

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IKE QUEBEC: Nancy (With The Laughing), Born To Be Blue, The Man I Love, Lover Man, Willow Weep For Me, If I Could Be With You, Imagination, There Is No Greater Love

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STANLEY TURRENTINE: Willow Weep For Me, Since I Fell For You, Then I'll Be Tired Of You, Someone To Watch Over Me, They All Say I'm The Biggest

Fool, More Than You Know, God Bless The Child, Watch What Happens, A Child Is Born

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