

Clifford Brown – Jam Session
The EmArcy Jazz Series

This morning's choice from the library is the second of two albums which were recorded live in front of an audience, both LP's were originally released in 1955. The first part of the concert resulted in the EmArcy album, **Dinah Jams** (MG 36000) by **Dinah Washington** and is one I highly recommend. The album submitted for your examination is titled **Jam Session** (EmArcy MG 36002) and the musicians are an all-star group including the members of **The Clifford Brown-Max Roach Quintet** who also appeared on **Dinah Jams**. The artists featured are **Clifford Brown**, **Maynard Ferguson**, **Clark Terry** on trumpet; **Herb Geller** on alto sax; **Harold Land** on tenor sax; **Junior Mance** and **Richie Powell** on piano; **Keter Betts** and **George Morrow** on bass; **Max Roach** on drums and **Dinah Washington** on vocals. **Jam Session** was my introduction to trumpet player **Clifford Brown** and the quintet he co-led with drummer **Max Roach**, and I first heard this album at my other home in **Cleveland, Ohio** on the weekends, **Record Rendezvous**. **Mr. Leo** (who you may remember from my review of **Miles Davis at Carnegie Hall**, this past May) told me how Clifford was an amazing trumpet player, and unlike many other musicians during the early part of the fifties, didn't drink or take drugs. Because I was such a good customer of the store, he lent me a few of his albums with the quintet and his 1956 **Memorial Album** (BLP 1526) on Blue Note to take home for a week and learn more about his music. Afterward I understood why he was so revered, and why the jazz community mourned his death deeply. The copy which is used for this report is an eighties Japanese Mono reissue (EXPR-1012) released as part of **The EmArcy Jazz Series** by **London Records** and **Nippon Phonogram Company, Limited!**

The album opens with a lengthy rendition of Cole Porter's 1929 classic **What Is This Thing Called Love?** The song was written for the Broadway musical, **Wake Up and Dream**, released that year. It is an undisputed jazz classic and remains one of Porter's most popular, recorded compositions. From the opening notes, this is a straight-ahead blowing session which commences with a spirited introduction by Roach preceding the ensemble presenting the melody collectively. Clifford is up first, revealing a musical maturity far beyond his years on the opening statement with a solo of dynamic energy. Land endows the next solo with long, flowing lines that are equally rewarding. Terry strolls into the third performance for an impressive and entertaining interpretation. Geller demonstrates the smooth, melodic quality of his playing with a light, fluid tone on the fourth reading. Morrow takes over on the next reading illustrating his agility and potent endurance which is a pleasant surprise. Ferguson maintains the intensity on the next interpretation with plenty of strength and a fullness of tone. Roach is a tower of strength on the following reading, swinging with a relentlessness which recalls the sound of **Art Blakey**. Powell takes the spotlight last, hitting a perfect groove with plenty of incandescent heat. The ensemble wraps things up with a vivacious finale that receives thunderous approval from the audience.

Dinah Washington makes her only appearance on the 1939 popular song, **Darn That Dream** by Jimmy Van Heusen and Eddie DeLange. The song was introduced in the Broadway musical, **Swingin' The Dream**, also released in 1939. **Richie Powell** remains on the piano for this number and **Keter Betts**, who was a member of Ms. Washington's trio at the time, takes over on bass. The song is also a showpiece for Harold Land who plays the melody and first two verses of the opening solo with delicately graceful phrases which make a strong case for interpreting a ballad. The entire ensemble provides the backdrop behind Dinah's luscious lyrics which are delivered with exquisite softness and elegant phrasing into a gorgeous finale to end the first side. **Move** by jazz drummer and percussionist Denzil Best opens side two at a rapid tempo for the expedient main theme by the ensemble. Brownie leads off the solos with a fire-breathing showcase of compelling power and energetic exhilaration. Land takes the reins next on a whirlwind performance that flows with passionate phrases, followed by Terry who provides an electrically charged, hard-driving interpretation. Morrow displays his skills as an entertaining conversationalist on a blazing interpretation, succeeded by Geller who provides an equally fierce reading, illustrating



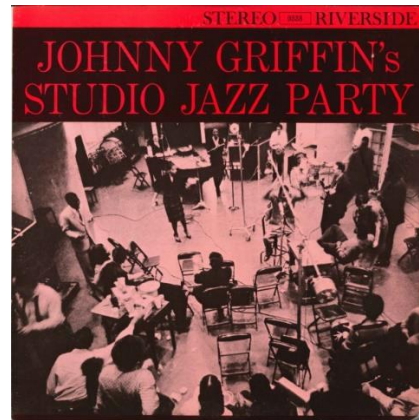
the splendor of his tone at full speed. Ferguson blows up a storm on a captivating improvisation with a vigorous attack. Roach is a forceful improvisational stylist on the next performance, soaring with brisk emotion, steady time and complete control. **Junior Mance** gets his second opportunity to solo and closes with a swift-moving contribution of very resourceful choruses which are cleverly presented.

The final selections on **Jam Session** are a medley of tunes from **The Great American Songbook** that begins with a tender rendition of the 1937 show tune, **My Funny Valentine** by Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart. Powell expresses great care and thoughtfulness with an attractive touch on the song's lone solo anchored by Morrow and Roach's meticulous understructure. **Clark Terry** is the featured performer on the 1938 song, **Don't Worry 'Bout Me** by Rube Bloom and Ted Koehler. Terry really shines here, opening at a slow tempo which blossoms into a remarkably subtle performance that infuses a little humor at the end which the audience finds delightful. **Bess, You Is My Woman Now** appeared in the 1935 opera, **Porgy & Bess** and was written by George and Ira Gershwin. It is a showcase for **Herb Geller** who delivers a majestic interpretation of the melody and a melancholy solo statement. Brownie closes out the session with a gorgeous performance on **It Might as Well Be Spring**. The song was written in 1945 by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II and featured in the film, **State Fair**. Clifford presents the ballad with warmth and delicacy, demonstrating a simple beauty with a soft, open-trumpet sound which brings an end to one of the most enjoyable live sets I've heard on record.

My copy used for this report is the 5th Japanese Mono pressing (EXPR-1012) and unfortunately, I don't know exactly when the reissue was released or who did the recording, because that information doesn't appear on either the record or cover of this LP or **Dinah Jams**. Don't let that dissuade you against seeking either record out for your library. The sound of the instruments comes through vibrantly, placing you in the audience to hear these jazz greats at their best. Though currently out of print on LP and CD, **Jam Session** and its companion LP, **Dinah Jams** are enjoyable albums you can enjoy any time of the day or evening with something to offer most jazz tastes.

Jam Session - An impromptu jazz performance by musicians who do not regularly play together, and for their own enjoyment. Source: Dictionary.com

What Is This Thing Called Love, Darn That Dream, Bess, You Is My Woman Now – Source: Wikipedia.org



Johnny Griffin – Johnny Griffin's Studio Jazz Party
The Original Riverside Recording Series

This title from the library brings renown jazzman **Johnny Griffin** into the spotlight for his only live album as a leader on Riverside Records. Submitted now for your approval is the 1961 LP, **Johnny Griffin's Studio Jazz Party** (RLP-9338), recorded before a live audience that was invited to the recording session inside **Plaza Sounds Studios**. Joining the saxophonist are Dave Burns on trumpet; **Norman Simmons** on piano; **Victor Sproles** on bass and **Ben Riley** on drums. My copy is **The Riverside Original Recording Series** Japanese Stereo reissue (SMJ-6145), released in 1976 by **Victor Musical Industries, Inc.** The performance is hosted by **Babs Gonzales** who welcomes the crowd to the session on the opening track, **Party Time** and introduces the first song, **Good Bait** by Count Basie and Tadd Dameron. This standard was written in 1944, becoming a feature in Basie's and Dizzy Gillespie's Orchestra. Griffin and the trio introduce the song slowly, picking up immensely when the melody moves to a medium-fast tempo. Dave sets the pattern for the song on the opening statement with punchy rhythms, crisp lines, and a crackling tone. Simmons strolls into the next reading for an impressive interpretation which shows no strain as each phrase unfolds. Both horns share a few more statements before the ensemble returns for a march-like closing chorus and amusing ending.

The first side ends on an uptempo note with the 1942 popular song, **There Will Never Be Another You**, written by Harry Warren and Mack Gordon for the musical film **Iceland**, which premiered that same year. The first



recording outside the film was a 78-rpm single (B-11574) by vocalist **Joan Merrill** recorded for the RCA subsidiary, **Bluebird**. The trio opens with an abridged introduction, stepping aside as Burns begins the opening chorus and lead solo ambitiously with a drive which generates its own excitement. Simmons is dazzling on the next reading with choruses which illustrate a mature sound that swings freely. Griffin romps through the next statement of this cheery bouncer with long, flowing lines that are rewarding in every respect to the delight of one fan who urges him on as his solo progresses. Spoles is up next to give a brief statement with an agility that shows he is much more than a solid foundation and sets up the front line to share a few final thoughts before the ensemble brings the song to a close to the delight of the crowd.

Babs opens the second side with a message to the crowd, then the group tears into Dave Burns' **Toe-Tappin'** which possesses great speed from the start and the interaction between the front line during the main theme is marvelous. Dave kicks off the lead solo with a passionate presentation which launches its own fireworks in perfect harmony on each note to the equally incandescent foundation by the rhythm section. Norman sustains the ferocious pace with a knockout performance on the next statement, then Johnny charges ahead with enthusiastic phrases on the tune's longest interpretation which are constructed marvelously. Victor fuels the final reading with pure adrenalin for an exclamation point that will have your fingers popping and your toes tapping to the contagious beat until the quintet's soft fade finale and audience's fervent expression of approval.

The LP's only standard is a classic from **The Great American Songbook** which Babs introduces in French. **You've Changed** was written in 1942 by Carl Fischer and Bill Carey and has been covered by many vocalists in the jazz and pop genres. The definitive vocal of this popular song, in my opinion, was sung by **Billie Holiday** on the 1958 Columbia album, **Lady In Satin** (CL 1157/CS 8048). After a brief introduction by the trio, Burns plays the first half of the opening chorus with Johnny playing the second half to finish the melody. Both horns are the featured soloists and their theme statement is repeated to end the song. In between is a tender ballad performance by Dave who turns in one of the prettiest presentations ever heard. Griffin's second reading is also gorgeous, presenting each verse with a warm, serene elegance in an interpretation that's thoughtfully reflective.

The final track which was written for this performance is the medium-tempo blues, **Low Gravy** by Babs Gonzales. Tenor saxophonist Paul Gonsalves also recorded Babs' composition on his 1961 Jazzland album, **Gettin' Together** (JLP 36/JLP 936S). The quintet increases the mood slightly on the opening chorus, then Dave opens the readings, bringing out the joy with cheerful choruses which puts the audience and listener in a festive mood. Johnny makes an indelible imprint by radiating confidence with an easy flow and steady tone on the next performance. Norman comes through with renewed vigor on a relaxing, amiable final presentation that leads back to the closing chorus and a gentle ending as the applause fades to mark the end of this very enjoyable Studio Jazz Party.

The original recording was engineered by **Ray Fowler**, the man behind some of the greatest jazz albums on Riverside and Jazzland with the mastering done by **Jack Matthews of Components Corporation** for this Japanese LP. Both men have done their job well because the sound is vivid with each instrument providing a realistic soundstage that surrounds your sweet spot, placing you in the best seat to enjoy the performance along with the crowd. The music which makes up the program is equally enjoyable, and I even found Gonzales' comments throughout the album colorful and its crystal-clear Babs was in a party mood as the set progressed. In short, **Johnny Griffin's Studio Jazz Party** is a pleasurable program of music which still stands up well nearly six decades later and at nearly forty-six minutes, offers a benefit to the novice or knowledgeable listener that he or she will get their money's worth from a performance they can revisit anytime.

Good Bait, There Will Never Be Another You, You've Changed – Source: JazzStandards.com, Wikipedia.org



John Coltrane-Archie Shepp – New Thing at Newport Impulse!

And now for something completely different! It was fifty-eight years ago in 1960 when **Creed Taylor**, a producer for **ABC-Paramount Records** created and launched **Impulse Records**, the company's label exclusively devoted to Jazz. He is known primarily for his own label **CTI Records** which originally began as a subsidiary of **A&M Records** in 1967. Taylor's career which also included work at **Bethlehem** and **Verve Records** has been one of the most successful in jazz. He would only produce the first nine albums on Impulse, but six of those LP's would become contemporary classics, **The Great Kai & J.J.** (A-1/AS-1); **Genius + Soul = Jazz** (A-2/AS-2); **Out of The Cool** (A-4/AS-4); **The Blues and The Abstract Truth** (A-5/AS-5); **Africa/Brass** (A-6/AS-6) and **Art Blakey and The Jazz Messengers** (A-7/AS-7)!

This choice from the library which is submitted for your assessment was produced by Taylor's successor, **Bob Thiele** and is titled **New Thing at Newport** (A-4/AS-94). A 1965 live date at **The Newport Jazz Festival** featuring performances by **The John Coltrane Quartet** and **The Archie Shepp Quartet** which hit the record shops the following year. My copy used for this week's report is the 1968 Stereo reissue, the 2nd US pressing. For their only song on the record, **John Coltrane** on tenor sax appears with **McCoy Tyner** on piano; **Jimmy Garrison** on double bass and **Elvin Jones** on drums. **Archie Shepp**, who made his debut on Impulse a year earlier with the release, **Four For Trane** (A-71/AS-71) performs the remaining four songs with his quartet featuring the leader on tenor sax; **Bobby Hutcherson** on vibraphone; **Barre Phillips** on double bass and **Joe Chambers** on drums.

The album opens with an introduction of Coltrane's group by **Father Norman O'Connor**, a Roman Catholic priest who was a huge jazz fan, a longtime radio host at **WGBH** in

Boston and a weekly columnist to **The Boston Globe**. He also had a syndicated jazz program, was a frequent master of ceremonies of various concerts and festivals including Newport. **The Jazz Priest** as he would be called until his death was also a contributing writer for **Down Beat**, **Metronome**, and other magazines. The quartet launches into a vigorous uptempo rendition of the saxophonist's **One Down, One Up** which sets the pace with a nucleus of energy on the introduction and opening melody. Tyner's lead solo emerges as a feast of compelling rhythm with a resilient musical personality. Coltrane steals the show with an exciting intensity which stretches the boundaries of bop to near avant-garde improvisation, leaving the audience drained, but begging for more at the song's conclusion.

The Archie Shepp Quartet concludes the first side with the first of four songs they perform for the festival audience. **Rufus Swung His Face at Last to The Wind**, then his **Neck Snapped** (which was introduced on Four For Trane and depicts a lynching) begins their uptempo performance with a duet dialogue between Archie and Hutcherson on the introduction. Phillips and Chambers join in for the ensemble harmony on the main theme. Shepp puts a lot of personality into the opening statement, soaring into the stratosphere with a distinctly masculine performance which explodes over the rhythm section's robust groundwork at a rapid beat. Hutcherson takes his turn next, delivering a driving-seat initiative that explores the limits of harmonic organization while staying inside a jazz structure. Chambers takes us for a free-wheeling rollercoaster ride on the closer with an aggressively expedient presentation which has a strong and very individual resonance, ultimately propelling the quartet back to the end theme and an abrupt close amidst the audience's approval.

Hutcherson leads the rhythm section through a dreamy introduction to the second Shepp original, **Le Matin Des Noire** which opens the second side. As the song progresses, Shepp makes his introduction playing and building the emotion gradually on the trio's foundation. His opening statement is an uncomplicated blowing solo delivered with a laid-back sincerity and consummate skill. Phillips and Hutcherson each provide concise thoughts which are emotionally deep and stirring, prior to the song's fade out and appreciative applause from the audience. **Scag** is delivered with unflinching realism by Shepp and the quartet about the dangers of heroin and where the addiction ultimately leads, the gutter, prison or the grave. The two-beat delivery throughout the song by Hutcherson, Phillips, and Chambers is reminiscent of the tick-tock of a clock. The

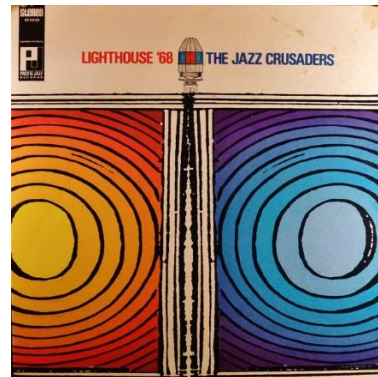


saxophonist recites a grim message to the audience and listener rather than playing the notes as the clock continues to beat ever louder, culminating into a crash of the cymbals by Chambers that marks the end! The album closer is **Call Me By My Rightful Name** by Shepp, the quartet establishes a midtempo groove on the introduction which is maintained throughout the song. Shepp creates a bittersweet, lyrical interpretation which is finely integrated with the gentle groundwork by the rhythm section, as enjoyed by the appreciative audience at song's end!

The music on **New Thing at Newport** is a unique representation of one of the final live performances of the classic quartet of John Coltrane featuring Tyner, Garrison, and Jones. The legendary saxophonist would change direction and personnel within a year moving towards a more spiritual sound in his music. **The Archie Shepp Quartet** would continue to evolve from Post-Bop toward the new wave of jazz known as Free Improvisation, but in the years to come would also record works of Contemporary Jazz, Modal Jazz, and Soul-Jazz. The one issue I have with this album is the same problem I had with **Miles and Monk at Newport** (CL 2178/CS 8978) released in 1963. Both LP's should have been released as two-record sets spotlighting each band on both sides of the record. I mention this because the jazz public only gets one song from Coltrane while there are four from Shepp. The 1991 GRP-Impulse CD-album (GRD-105) released under **The Legendary Masters of Jazz Series** adds **My Favorite Things** by The John Coltrane Quartet while there are four from Shepp plus Billy Taylor's introduction of The Archie Shepp Quartet and **Gingerbread, Gingerbread Boy** from Shepp's group.

The LP has been out of print in the US since 1980 and there were two pressings that year. The third and final pressing by ABC Records-Impulse (AS-94) and the first pressing by MCA Records-Impulse (MCA 29019 – AS-94). The recording itself by **Buddy Graham** and **Frank Bruno** is distinguished for its transparency and clarity. One final thought, if you're not a fan of Avant-Garde, Free Jazz or Free Improvisation, **New Thing at Newport** may not be the album for you. However, if you're looking for something to challenge your musical intellect that is along the lines of **The Shape of Jazz To Come** by Ornette Coleman (Atlantic 1317/SD 1317); **Out To Lunch** (Blue Note BLP 4163/BST 84163) and **Outward Bound** (New Jazz NJLP 8326 – Prestige PRLP 7311/PRST 7311) by Eric Dolphy or **Point of Departure** (BLP 4167/BST 84167) by Andrew Hill, **New Thing at Newport** is one I can and do recommend for a spot in your library!

Father Norman O'Connor – Source: Wikipedia.org



The Jazz Crusaders – Lighthouse '68
Pacific Jazz

My choice from the library to discuss this time is by four friends from Houston, Texas who began performing locally in 1956. They were originally known as **The Swingsters** and **The Nite Hawks**, but moved to Los Angeles in 1961, changed their name and became one of the best West Coast ensembles of the sixties, **The Jazz Crusaders**. I first discovered their music in 1962, the year I became a jazz fan thanks to one of my heroes on the airwaves, **Chuck Lansing** of **WCUY 92.3 FM**. He began his nightly show with **The Young Rabbits**, the last track on their second LP, **Lookin' Ahead** (PJ-43/ST-43), also released that year. The song became a huge hit for the group and I loved the sound of the trombone-tenor sax front line. The quartet consists of **Wayne Henderson** on trombone; **Wilton Felder** on tenor sax; **Joe Sample** on piano; **Stix Hooper** on drums with **Jimmy Bond**, **Victor Gaskin**, and **Herbie Lewis** filling the bass chair on several of their records during the decade. **Lighthouse '68** (ST-10131) documents the group performing live at one of the premiere West Coast clubs, **The Lighthouse Café**, in business since 1949 and now a multi-genre venue which features jazz twice weekly. The bassist joining the quartet on this date is **Buster Williams** and my copy used in this report is the original 1968 US Stereo release. This year marked the 50th Anniversary of the album's release which made it perfect to offer for your consideration.

The set opens with **Oogo-Boo-Ga-Loo**, an infectiously danceable audience grabber by Stix Hooper which begins with a lovely introduction by the trio, then blossoms into a sanctified styled theme treatment. Wilton goes to work



first with a soulfully flavored, funky performance that calls to mind the sound of tenor man **Willis Jackson** and will have you tapping your toes and wanting to get up and dance. Joe takes over for a brief performance of irresistibly appealing phrases on the closer, leading to the theme's reprise and audience's appreciative applause. **Eleanor Rigby** by John Lennon and Paul McCartney is one of **The Beatles** most famous and recorded compositions. The quintet's rendition does the song proud with a midtempo version which begins with them exploring the melody collectively. Sample is the song's only soloist and he gives an extended performance of dazzling melodic lines which are consistently creative and exquisitely presented.

The tempo moves up for **Native Dancer**, the first of two contributions by Buster Williams which gets off to a roaring start with a nimble melody presentation. The aggressive opening statement by Joe moves swiftly through each verse like a musical twister, then comes Wayne who makes his first solo appearance next with a jubilant spirit during his performance which is remarkable. Wilton steps into the spotlight next for a swinging reading of limitless energy. Buster takes over for the finale with a delightful interpretation that is a model of spontaneous construction, showing off his agility as an improviser and extraordinary inspiration as a composer effectively. Sample's **Never Had It So Good** starts the second side with an easy spirited beat that leads us back to church with a bit of boogaloo in the imaginative display of harmony during the group's opening melody. The solo order is Felder, Henderson and Sample, and each man preaches their part of this sermon weaving a series of rhythmic ideas which swing comfortably to the delight of their extended congregation, the Lighthouse audience.

The Emperor, also by Williams takes us back to straightforward bop with the solos in the same order as the previous tune. Wilton starts the soloing with a passionately personal opening statement with each phrase beautifully articulated as he weaves gracefully in unison with the stunning foundation provided by Joe, Buster and Stix. Wayne sustains the relaxing beat with an attractive reading possessing a great amount of warmth and excitement. Joe makes a succinct statement with a full-bodied interpretation of finesse which is skillfully performed. Buster eases into the final interpretation with a performance as mild as a smooth sherry and a sound that goes straight to the heart. The album ends with John Coltrane's **Impressions**, taken at breakneck speed with an invigorating introduction by the trio and theme statement

led by the horns. Henderson takes off first with a jet-propelled interpretation followed by Felder who infuses the second solo with searing fire for an energetic workout. Sample comes next with an exhilarating performance of fierce intensity and Stix exchanges a few clever comments with both horns prior to the effervescent ending.

Three years after this album was recorded the quintet would shorten its name to **The Crusaders**, moving towards Jazz-Fusion, Jazz-Funk and Smooth Jazz. Their biggest hit would come four years after Henderson left the group to become a record producer in 1979 with **Street Life** (MCA Records MCA 3094) featuring Soul vocalist **Randy Crawford**. The remaining members would stay together until 1983 when Hooper left to pursue a solo career. In 1991, the surviving members Sample and Felder released what would be their final album as **The Crusaders, Healing The Wounds** (MCA Records 09638 – GRP 9638). In 1995, **Wayne Henderson** revived **The Jazz Crusaders** name for a CD-album, **Happy Again** (Sin-Drome Records SD 8909). Henderson who suffered from diabetes, passed away from heart failure on April 5, 2014 at age seventy-four. Joe Sample passed away five months later on September 12, 2014 from Mesothelioma and **Wilton Felder** passed away one year later on September 27, 2015 from Multiple myeloma, both were seventy-five years old. **Stix Hooper** and flutist **Hubert Laws** who (I didn't know was a founding member) left the group in 1960 to attend **The Juilliard School of Music** are the only surviving members of the original group.

Dino Lappas, the engineer on **Lighthouse '68** has also worked on their second live album, **Live at The Lighthouse '66** (PJ-10098/ST-20098); their fourth and final live album, **Lighthouse '69** (World Pacific Jazz – Pacific Jazz ST-20165); **The Three Sounds Live at The Lighthouse** (BLP 4265/BST 84265) a year earlier in 1967 and also in 1972 on **Elvin Jones Live at The Lighthouse** (BN-LA015-G) and **Grant Green Live at The Lighthouse** (BN-LA037-G2) on Blue Note. The sound quality is splendid throughout with plenty of clarity across the frequency band of treble, midrange and bass. This is particularly noticeable with a good set of headphones; the benefit is the richness and detail of each instrument and specifically Buster Williams' bass which is outstanding. If you only know of this talented group of musicians from their records as **The Crusaders**, I invite you to audition **Lighthouse '68** during your next vinyl hunt for a spot in your jazz library. The album will transport you back in time to that intimate Hermosa Beach venue, **The Lighthouse Café** to hear **The Jazz Crusaders** at the top of their game playing



some of the best Hard-Bop and Post-Bop you'll hear! The last vinyl pressing of **Lighthouse '68** (APBL-2312) was issued by Applause Records in 1982 and is out of print. The CD-album released in 2004 by Pacific Jazz Records adds four additional tracks to the LP track listing, **Cathy The Cooker** by Wayne Henderson; **Shadows** by Buster Williams, **Tough Talk** by Stix Hooper, Joe Sample and Wayne Henderson, and **Third Principle** by Wilton Felder, and is to my knowledge out of print as well!

Cathy The Cooker, Happy Again, Healing The Wounds, Elvin Jones at The Lighthouse, Grant Green at The Lighthouse, Dino Lappas, Live at The Lighthouse '66, Lighthouse '69, Shadows, Street Life, Third Principle, Tough Talk – Source: Discogs.com

Jimmy Bond, Randy Crawford, Wilton Felder, Victor Gaskin, Wayne Henderson, Stix Hooper, Hubert Laws, Herbie Lewis, The Julliard School of Music, Joe Sample – Source: Wikipedia.org



Yuko Mabuchi Trio – Yuko Mabuchi Trio, Volume 1
Yarlung Records

On the stage, a beautiful young woman sits at a baby grand piano unleashing an aggressive flood of sound into the audience. Behind her are two elegantly dressed gentlemen on bass and drums, who match her creativity, precise timing, and articulation with their own musical artistry note-for-note. Her name is **Yuko Mabuchi**, her bandmates are **Del Atkins** on bass and **Bobby Breton** on drums. Their 2018 release, **Yuko Mabuchi Trio, Volume 1** (Yarlung Records YAR88157-161V) was recorded live at **The Brain and Creativity Institute's Camilleri Hall** in **Los Angeles, California** on **March 31, 2017**. The performance was in

honor of the **25th Anniversary of The Los Angeles and Orange County Audio Society**, and their President, **Bob Levi** who was celebrating his **70th Birthday** as well. I know Bob who has years as a member of **The Atlanta Audio Society** and his jazz recommendations have never failed to bring immense pleasure to the AAS members including yours truly.

One of Cole Porter's most recorded compositions opens the first side, the 1929 classic, **What Is This Thing Called Love?** It was first performed by British singer, **Elsie Carlisle** in the Broadway musical, **Wake Up and Dream** and has been a well-loved jazz standard for nearly eight decades. The song begins with a midtempo solo piano introduction by Yuko which becomes a spirited theme treatment by the trio. Ms. Mabuchi leads off with a musical gem on the vivacious opening statement. Del packs a beefy punch on the second solo, then Bobby gets to shine next, applying a contagious rock-solid beat that drives all the way to a brief interlude by Yuko prior to the closing chorus and lively finale. **Value Noire** is a very pretty ballad by Cincinnati composer Mark Lehman who originally wrote the tune for solo piano. It ends the first side, receiving a touchingly tender treatment by the trio and Yuko has the showcase to herself as the song's only soloist. She delivers a presentation of exquisite beauty anchored by the serene supplement of Del and Bobby into an elegant ending.

The pace slows down as the second side begins with the 1947 popular song **On Green Dolphin Street** by Bronislaw Kaper and Ned Washington. It was composed for the film **Green Dolphin Street** released that year and became a jazz standard after **Miles Davis** recorded it on the 1958 Columbia album, **Jazz Track** (CL 1268). The beat goes up to midtempo when Yuko gives the song's only solo performance an easy swing in her tone which excels with a steady assurance, preceding softening her speed for the theme's reprise and climax. The album ends with **Seriously** by singer-songwriter **Sara Bareilles** who wrote it for fellow singer **Leslie Odom, Jr.**, who appeared on the weekly public radio program and podcast, **This American Life**. The trio performed this tune for the first time during their concert, opening delicately with Del leading on the introduction. Yuko takes over for the theme and tells the song's story with a youthful creativeness and ingenuity that is especially endearing. Del follows with a tender, sweet reading that's warm and relaxing before Yuko's piano literally floats through the final statement, making an ideal closer to this excellent and very entertaining album.



The quality of the musicianship on the LP is incredible, each member of the trio isn't just counting and keeping a beat, they're listening to the sounds they're creating and complementing each other's solos effortlessly. Also, each individual performance receives accompaniment of the highest quality from the other two members. The blending of the instruments sounds like they've been playing together for years and instinctively know what's needed to make each song better. And now, the sound! **Yuko Mabuchi Trio, Volume 1** is a single 45-rpm audiophile LP, that alone is an exciting concept which all owners of the two-record sets can appreciate. The recording engineers are **Bob Attiyeh** and **Arian Jensen**, the mastering engineers are Mr. Attiyeh and **Steve Hoffman** and the 45-rpm mastering was done by **Bernie Grundman**. The sound is spectacular with an absolutely stunning soundstage in all areas, the highs are detailed and velvety smooth. There's a liveliness in the midrange that gets the listener in touch with the music without any harshness. The bass is clean, crisp, extended and not fatiguing in any way.

By the time you read this review, **Yuko Mabuchi Trio, Volume 2** (YAR71621-161V), the second 45-rpm album on **Yarlung Records** will be available to purchase for your jazz library and I look forward to hearing more from this talented threesome on record and in performance in the years to come. In the mood for an excellent live jazz album that will excite your ears with superb sonics, articulate and fresh performances? I submit for your next vinyl hunt, **Yuko Mabuchi Trio, Volume 1**, a live album from one of the premiere concert halls in the world that's not only worth the trip for anyone who loves trio jazz but one you can revisit anytime you place the record on the turntable!

On Green Dolphin Street, What Is This Thing Called Love? –
Source: JazzStandards.com

Valse Noire, Seriously – Source: Album liner notes by Bob Attiyeh

For all who celebrate the season, I wish you all Happy Holidays from my home and heart to yours. May all your gifts run at 33 1/3 or 45 rpm's with Happy Listening if they do. It's been my pleasure to share my thoughts on some of the LP's in my library this year. Thank you so much for the privilege and if I've managed to pique your interest in any of the albums and artists enough to investigate and audition them for yourselves, then I've succeeded beyond my wildest expectations. I look forward to joining you again in 2019!