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Greg
Abate
& Phil
Woods
with the
Tim Ray Trio
Kindred Spirits
Live at Chan's





Personnel

Greg Abate alto saxophone, soprano saxophone on "Willow"

Phil Woods alto saxophone, all tracks except "Angel Eyes"

Tim Ray piano

John Lockwood bass

Mark Walker drums

Recorded live at Chan's, Woonsocket, RI on August 11, 2014

Recording Engineer: Antonio Oliart Ros

Mixed & Mastered by Antonio Oliart Ros

Produced by Greg Abate

Executive Producer: Neal Weiss

Photography & Package Design: David Arruda Jr

Greg takes the first solo on all selections except:

"A Sleepin' Bee," "Cedar's Blues" and "I'll Remember April"

Spoken Tracks, Disc 1

track 8, Greg & Phil, Intro to The End of a Love Affair, "Fried Clams With Bellies"

track 9, Phil, Intro to Angel Eyes, "Phil and Sequel"

track 10, Phil, Intro to Willow Weep For Me, "Emotionally Involved"

track 11, Greg, End of Set 1, "Different Keys"

Spoken Track, Disc 2

Track 7, Greg & Phil, Intro to Moonlight in Vermont, "The First One's Free"

Disc 1 » Set 1

1. **Steeplechase** (Thriving on a Riff) 11:34
Charlie Parker
Kassner Associated Publishing, ASCAP
2. **A Sleepin' Bee** 11:36
Music by Harold Arlen
Words by Truman Capote
Harwin Music Corp., ASCAP
3. **The End of a Love Affair** 9:43
Edward C. Redding
Universal Music Corp. ASCAP
4. **Angel Eyes** 8:28
Matt Dennis, Earl Brent
Music Sales Corp., ASCAP
5. **Cedar's Blues** 9:12
Cedar Walton
Vernita Music, BMI
6. **Willow Weep For Me** 11:47
Ann Ronell
Ann Ronell Music, ASCAP
7. **Steeplechase** (short version) 4:39
Charlie Parker
Kassner Associated Publishing, ASCAP
8. **Fried Clams With Bellies** (spoken) 1:34
9. **Phil and Sequel** (spoken) 2:09
10. **Emotionally Involved** (spoken) :57
11. **Different Keys** (spoken) :14

Disc 2 » Set 2

1. **I'll Remember April** 9:21
Gene De Paul
Hub Music Corp Inc., ASCAP
 2. **Moonlight in Vermont** 9:45
John Blackburn, Karl Suessdorf
Johnny R. Music, Michael H. Golden Inc., ASCAP
 3. **Speak Low** 8:55
Kurt Weill
Hampshire House Publishing Corp., ASCAP
 4. **Strollin'** 7:48
Horace Silver
Ecaroh Music, ASCAP
 5. **Yardbird Suite** 9:25
Charlie Parker
Kassner Associated Publishers LTD., ASCAP
 6. **Moonlight in Vermont** (short version) 5:09
John Blackburn, Karl Suessdorf
Johnny R. Music, Michael H. Golden Inc., ASCAP
 7. **The First One's Free** (spoken) 1:34
- | | |
|----------------------|---------|
| Disc 1 running time: | 1:12:00 |
| Disc 2 running time: | 52:02 |
| Total running time: | 2:04:02 |

Friday, September 11, 2015

Exactly one week ago, Phil Woods, 83, commemorated the 60 anniversary of the legendary “Charlie Parker with Strings” album in a concert at the Manchester Craftsmen’s Guild, with members of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. Before his last number, he announced that it would be his last performance, and shortly afterward, he canceled his remaining performances, including a release party for this CD, scheduled for Oct. 3, 2015 at Chan’s in Woonsocket, RI, with the same band that was recorded for the CD you now hold in your hands. As of now, the night at Chan’s will take place without Phil, although he will be there in spirit for all of us.

I have been a lifelong Phil Woods fan, seeing and hearing him in person for the first time on Dec. 30, 1963, in a concert at the recently-opened Philharmonic Hall at Lincoln Center in New York City. That concert produced the highly regarded LP, and later 2 CD set, by Thelonious Monk titled “Big Band and Quartet in Concert.” Phil was a key contributor to this all-star and historic evening, and the only one to solo on every big band chart.

The next time I heard and saw Phil Woods in person was this night, a little over 50 years later. As you can hear yourself, he was in fine form. What I learned that night is that he is also an entertainer, witty and sharp, in spite of the beginnings of some memory issues, which unfortunately are shared by many others of a similar age or even younger, including me. The decision to include some of his spoken introductions and banter was made to give the listener an idea of the man in addition to what comes from his horn.

I want to make particular mention of an ironic remark of Phil’s. Just before playing “Willow Weep For Me,” he says, “we would like to perform this without getting emotionally involved.” And yet, when it is his turn to solo, the band drops out and what follows is a beautifully crafted duet with bassist John Lockwood. Phil is completely involved emotionally, but in a nuanced and often understated way.

Greg Abate clearly shines in the presence of one of his heroes, muses and mentors. The styles are complimentary, and it does take some work to know which one is playing at any given time, other than on “Willow,” on which Greg plays soprano. The joy that is communicated in these sides is indeed the product of Kindred Spirits.

Neal Weiss

The temptation to call this collection a testament to New England jazz is great. It features five artists who were either born and raised or chose to make their home in the region, playing with heightened intensity and sensitivity at one of the region's great jazz rooms, and released on the region's reigning jazz label. Yet the temptation should be avoided. We are well beyond the times when their origins or their preferred coasts typed music and musicians, and in any case the music is more accurately viewed as a prime example of jazz's essential and universal verities.

If a territory marks the roots of the music made by Greg Abate, Phil Woods and company, it would be the Kansas City environs that nurtured their primary alto saxophone model, Charlie Parker. The collection begins and ends with Parker compositions, and deals throughout in the articulate virtuosity that Parker made jazz's lingua franca for the past 70 years. As Woods and Abate have proven individually for decades, this is hardly a static language, but rather a vibrant, still-contemporary vernacular that continues to move, surprise and elevate its listeners when performed by masters.

Abate, who was born in Fall River, Massachusetts, still resides in New England. He is world-renowned yet, from his days as a Berklee College student and as part of the Duke Bellaire Big Band, has always maintained an active local presence. While fluent on a variety of saxophones and flute, Abate's primary voice has always been the alto sax, and he plays it here with characteristic long lines, coherent ideas and the energy of an Olympic athlete. He also sets a pace that generates responses in kind from his partners, who happen to include one of his primary influences.

By his own admission, Phil Woods has tempered some of the impetuosity that Abate maintains. The Springfield, Massachusetts native, now entering his seventh decade as a major voice in the music, has adjusted to the limitations imposed upon him as an emphysema sufferer. He is more inclined to follow the prescription for longevity imparted to him by Benny Carter, to "travel first class but play with economy," while showing no loss of humor, fire or inspirational virility. As was the case on an earlier recorded encounter with Abate from 2012, Woods is also inspired by the presence of his fellow saxophonist.

When Abate began his international recording career a quarter-century ago, he was frequently heard in the presence of such international stars as James Williams, George Mraz,

Playing with
Greg Abate is like
going home, straight
ahead, take first chorus
on the right, and you
can't miss it!

Pilgrims can play!

I should know!

Homeboy am I.

- Phil Woods



It was a great night at Chan's, recording with this great trio and having our special guest Phil Woods bring such inspiration to the session!

Thanks to the band for a swinging recording and to Neal Weiss and John Chan for making it all possible.

This recording is dedicated to the memory of Pamela Hedworth, who managed my tours in the UK for more than a decade, and also to the great Phil Woods. He is a major inspiration to me (and many others), and playing the gigs and recording with him has been a joy.

Phil is the closest I've come to playing with Charlie Parker.

- Greg Abate



Claudio Roditi, Kenny Barron and Billy Hart. As time has passed, Abate has featured musicians he is more likely to surround himself with when on home ground. Such is the case here, though the work of the Tim Ray, John Lockwood and Mark Walker rhythm section is nothing short of world-class. This is the same unit that supported Abate on his previous Whaling City Sound disc *Motif*, and it is as inspired as any of the great rhythm sections that have supported Abate in the past. While hailing from Phoenix (Ray), South Africa (Lockwood) and Chicago (Walker), the rich jazz education scene in Boston drew each of these men to the Boston area, where they have established first-call status through decades of gigs with all manner of artists. Those who only know Ray as Lyle Lovett's longtime pianist, or Lockwood as one-third of the free improvisation stalwart The Fringe, or Walker as the multiple-percussionist of Oregon, may be surprised to find these men in such a straight-ahead environment. The present music is hardly foreign to them, but more like an improvisational Esperanto that they speak with complete fluency and not a trace of accent.

Little commentary is required to enjoy the music. In addition to the Parker bookends, there are two well-chosen ballads and a few other standards, a rhythm section feature on "Speak Low" and a pair of jazz classics by two recently departed pianist/composers. While a variety of individual moments stand out, two speak to this listener as indicative of the joy that permeates the performances. The opening "Steeplechase," a Parker classic that Woods has returned to frequently, sets the bar high for the entire album with an intense set of exchanges that finds Abate alluding to one of his partner's classic features from a half-century ago, Oliver Nelson's "Blues and the Abstract Truth." And "I'll Remember April," which Woods has somehow never recorded before commercially, finds the senior alto saxophonist charging in after his host's opening statement with an improvisation that manages to allude to Edith Piaf and Walter Wanderley in rapid succession without losing coherence or momentum.

Great saxophonists have exchanged ideas in lesser-known corners of New England in the past (see Charlie Parker and Wardell Gray at Christy's in Framingham, Massachusetts, 1951). Nor is it unprecedented to find an alto saxophone giant recorded in an eatery that features Chinese food (Lee Konitz with Lennie Tristano at the Sing Song Room of the Confucius Restaurant, 1955). Live at Chan's deserves to be considered in that heavy company, while conveying a joy and brilliance all its own.

Bob Blumenthal

Bob Blumenthal has been writing about jazz since 1969, receiving Grammy awards in the category of Best Album Notes.



2011
Blues Foundation's
Keeping the
BLUES ALIVE
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FIRE UNDER THE
Woonsocket, RI
Top 10 Places
For Food And
Celebrate the
Year of the Rabbit
in the Western
Hemisphere
January 27, 2011