

Mp3 Contemporary Jazz Orchestra - Live At Pearls

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Give the best musicians in SF a Monday night to blow their brains out and this is what happens. 6 MP3 Songs JAZZ: Big Band, JAZZ: Bebop Details: The CJO embraces the Post Bop Big Band tradition exemplified by Thad Jones, Charles Mingus, Oliver Nelson, Frank Foster, Gerald Wilson, and Gil Evans. These artists, following in the rich tradition of Duke Ellington, Count Basie and other greats, added many of the jazz innovations that evolved after Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie and company established Bebop. So you'll hear things that remind you of Coltrane, Blakey, Shorter, Horace Silver and lots of folks who came after them. The material is very challenging and there is plenty of room for soloists to stretch out. Clubs that feature straight ahead jazz seven nights a week are extremely rare, so we are extremely grateful to Sonny Buxton and Pearl Wong (and now Kim Nalley and Steve Sheraton*) for giving the band a home to perform at every Monday night in San Francisco's North Beach. This CD contains the complete first set and the last tune of the night captured one November night. Jim Duke recorded it as an experiment with his DAT machine at the club. With some digital wizardry, we were able to bring out some of the elements not quite audible on the original. I regret that the brilliant cuts with our vocalist Duane Lawrence were not of acceptable audio quality. We will rectify that on the next CD. I also regret that the piano is not as present as it should be. However, if you listen closely, you will be rewarded with a wonderful solo by Mark Levine on Dolphin Dance. Mark is one of the Bay Area's most respected pianists and has been one of the pillars of the Orchestra. You'll hear the band playing with the zeal and energy which make it special. While we may not be the cleanest, the band sure swings and swinging is the prime directive. What may be different for some of you is how strong the drums are. I was brought up in Detroit with strong rhythm sections and aggressive drummers, exemplified by Elvin Jones, Jimmy Allen and Danny Spencer. The way they play adds tremendous suspense and energy to the music and forces soloists away from practiced lines and licks into more creative conversation, which to me, is what improvisation is all about. I've been playing with veteran Danny Spencer since the mid-eighties and consider myself blessed by his presence. In fact the name of the band is a tip of the hat to one of the most explorational groups to come out of Detroit: the Contemporary Jazz Quintet. Danny provided plenty

of edge for that legendar ensemble and he continues to do so for the CJO. Speaking of Detroiters, saxophonist Frank Foster composed and arranged "Tomorrows Blues Today. While "Shiny Stockings" has made him famous, he has a whole library of music which is daringly adventurous. He certainly stands out among the great post-bop composers. He's been very supportive of the CJO has added many of his tunes to our library. This composition provides us with the perfect vehicle to start the evening and set the pace for the night. The first solo and tag on the end is by young trumpet turk Chuck MacKinnon. Keep your ears open for him -- he's just getting started. The trombone solo is by Marty Wehner, one of the best trombonist on the scene today. The finely crafted tenor solo is from Ron Stahlings who plays with the CJO when hes not out with Huey Lewis. "Invitation", "Angel Eyes", "Dolphin Dance, and "Night in Tunisia" were all arranged by Eddie Nuccilli. I spent many years in Eddie's band where I learned a great deal about passion and respect for the music. We are fortunate that he has provided many of his arrangements to our book. Invitation features two Bay Area veterans delivering killer solos, alto saxophonist Harvey Wainapel, followed by trumpeter Warren Gale. Harvey helped start the CJO and has several recordings of his own that attest to his prowess. trumpeter Warren gale has attained an almost mythical stature in the Bay Area Jazz community. he has a unique style and he can stand head and shoulders with any trumpeter on the scene today. "Angel Eyes features Eric Crystal who is one of the most original new young voices on the alto saxophone (I've heard since I left Detroit. Back in Motown, there was another young man with a soulful and unique sound who developed so quickly it was scary. His name was Kenny Garrett.) I expect we will be hearing a lot more from him in the near future. If you listen to the counter lines in "Dolphin Dance" you will hear waves and splashes, I think this is one of the most tasteful arrangements of Herbie Hancock's masterpiece. Mark Levine plays a wonderful solo followed by Tod Dickow on tenor saxophone. Tod has distinguished himself as an inventive soloist and first call musician and in the Bay Area. (Guitarist Brad Buethe plays over a Nuccilli trademark vamp on the end.) After having the honor of playing with Dizzy over the years, it was a real pleasure to record his classic bop anthem "A Night in Tunisia". One associates Charlie Parker's definitive break with this tune and it is a clever and fitting tribute that Eddie composed a supersax type break to lead into the melody. I follow Warren on this one and play some at the end as well. Veteran guitarist Brad Buethe follows with a blistering solo. John Wiitala anchors the band with incredible agility, strength and soul. His reputation as one of today's premiere bassists is well deserved. I led a jam session for a number of years at a club

called Alvin's in Detroit. Alvin now lives in SF and has a place called the Cafe Barbar. When I moved West six years ago, he invited me to play a duet there which led me to ask some of the musicians I had just met: "who was the best guitarist in town? The answer was Brad Buethe. I was a bit nervous about playing with him, having put down the horn while moving. However, that night was pure magic and we've kept together in a small groups and the Big Band ever since. Incidentally, that night was so magical that my wife Terri tells me that it was this night she fell in love with me. Listen to his performances on this tune and his feature on Thad Jones "Basic-ally Yours" and see if you don't fall in love with his tasteful lyricism. Christopher Bonnier Pitts November 4th 1996 *Kim Nalley and Steve Sheraton purchased Jazz at Pearls in 2004 Personel: Harvey Wainapel lead alto saxophone Eric Crystal alto saxophone Tod Dickow tenor saxophone Ron Stahlings tenor saxophone Steve Adams baritone saxophone Bill Theurer lead trumpet Warren Gale trumpet Chuck MacKinnon trumpet Dave Scott trumpet Marty Wehner trombone Derrick James trombone Mike Busbe trombone Chuck Bennet bass trombone Danny Spencer drums Mark Levine piano John Wiitala bass Brad Buethe guitar

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