

Mp3 Yellowjackets - Mint Jam

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2003 Grammy Nominee "Best Contemporary Jazz Album." Multi Grammy Award winning Yellowjackets, have been at the forefront of the Contemporary Jazz genre for the past 20 years with their groundbreaking music. 12 MP3 Songs JAZZ: Jazz Fusion, JAZZ: World Fusion Details: Yellowjackets' self released CD "Mint Jam" is a Live Recording, double CD containing eight new original Yellowjackets compositions, and updated arrangements of the Yellowjacket classics: "Run For Your Life," "Evening News," "Tortoise and the Hare," and "Statue of Liberty." Recorded live at "The Mint" in Los Angeles, Yellowjackets members feel this recording has captured the essence of a live Yellowjackets concert. Mint Jam was a 2003 GRAMMY NOminee for "Best Contemporary Jazz Album" In late 1999, after a twenty year career marked by numerous awards including eleven Grammy nominations, two Grammy awards and a busy touring schedule that took us around the world, we found ourselves at a crossroads. The Internet and new technologies like Napster and MP3 among others, were radically transforming and unsettling the way we all lived and conducted business. It seemed that suddenly the old models were no longer working. It was at this point, for the first time since our inception, that we found ourselves without a recording contract. After considering our options, we felt that we wanted to take firmer control of our careers and decided to finance and produce a recording ourselves. It is relevant to note that when one records for a major label, the record company, not the recording artist, owns the music. If the label chooses to discontinue manufacturing your CD, as has been done with some of our recordings, the artist has no input whatsoever in the matter. In fact in most cases we have not been accorded the courtesy of being notified that our CDs were being ground up and turned into PVC! It was on the heels of the last such disappointing incident that we resolved to take matters into our own hands. The result is Mint Jam, a double CD recorded live at The Mint in Los Angeles July 24th and 25th, 2001. Many of our favorite jazz recordings have been live recordings. There's something magical and energizing about the interaction of the musicians and audience. Classic jazz recordings like Miles Davis' Four and More, John Coltrane's Live at Birdland and countless others bear witness to this phenomenon. We won't thrust Mint Jam into that pantheon, but we do feel that it honestly captures the energy and excitement of a live "Jackets"

concert. However, one critical difference is noteworthy. Most live recordings contain mostly previously recorded material. Mint Jam includes eight previously unrecorded works along with four re-worked Yellowjackets tunes. What follows is a brief description of each. "Les is Mo" is a tip of the hat to another classic live recording, Swiss Movement by Les McCann and Eddie Harris. Swiss Movement is an infectious blend of jazz and gospel music, a combination that has influenced the Yellowjackets sound since our first recording. We gave the formula a twist while trying to maintain the spirit of the original recording that inspired us. The Mint audience was truly the fifth "Jacket" during this performance as well as the entire two night engagement! "Boomtown" is another "groove" oriented tune, this time with a stronger "funk" component. We all began playing professional gigs in the late 60's and early 70's (except Marcus who was not yet born!) when R&B and funk music was spilling out over the airwaves. Bands like Sly and the Family Stone and Tower of Power inspired our generation of musicians. Also, jazz musicians like Miles Davis and Cannonball Adderly were beginning to incorporate this sound into their music. What really makes this music groove are the interlocking parts that propel the music and create the solid foundation above which the melody and improvisations soar. We revisit the R&B-gospel genre with "Motet" which also features Jimmy Haslip's inspired bass solo. We introduced this tune into our live sets several months ago and it quickly became one of our favorites. Subtle shifts in meter and phrasing give the song melodic and harmonic interest without disrupting the soulful groove. "Mofongo" is a Bob Mintzer composition featuring the EWI, the electric wind instrument. This energetic Latin derived tune was named after the spicy Cuban dish of the same name. In true Yellowjackets' style and more specifically Bob's, this song combines a Latin flavored groove with some intriguing melodic and harmonic twists. This performance comes from our final set of the two nights. Following "Mofongo" is "Blues for KJ." This Russell Ferrante composition is a tribute to the influence of Keith Jarrett's playing and writing on the band. There is extensive use of pedal points (shifting melodies and harmonies superimposed over a single bass note) and an engaging elasticity in the drum and bass rhythm. Listen also for the unusual saxophone and bass melody. Closing disc 1 is a reworking of "Runferyerlife" originally recorded in 1994 on the CD, Run for Your Life. This Bob Mintzer composition is based on the familiar song form, rhythm changes, and is taken at a breakneck pace! It features scintillating solos by both Bob and Marcus Baylor. Marcus is the most recent addition to Yellowjackets who began working with us in April of 2000. He previously toured and recorded with Cassandra Wilson and Kenny Garrett among others, all before the ripe age of 22! It's

been an absolute joy working with Marcus who has brought a renewed energy and excitement to the Yellowjackets' sound. Disc two begins with "Song for Carla." This is Bob's dedication to his beautiful wife, Carla. Since Russ' and Jimmy's wives had already had songs dedicated to them, ("Geraldine" and "Twilight for Nancy" respectively) Bob had to get on the stick! "Song for Carla" is a lilting gospel flavored piece in 3/4. "Tortoise and the Hare" is a reworking of a song from Yellowjackets' Grammy award winning recording, *Politics*. Originally recorded with multiple synthesizer parts, this version was retooled to be played live, with the acoustic piano playing all the synth parts, almost like a pointillistic Chopin etude. It's one of the most complex Yellowjackets' tunes but surprisingly has also become a fan favorite. "Mosaic" is a Bob Mintzer composition which explores the development of a simple theme through repeating the theme with a variety of harmonic underpinnings. This tune has many of Bob's signature melodic and harmonic trademarks. However, with the input of the various members of the ensemble, what results is clearly the "jacketizing" of the piece. The feel is somewhere between bossa and funk, and serves as a nice vehicle for Ferrante and Mintzer solos. Marcus Baylor definitely adds some heat to the groove. "New Jig" is a marriage of two infrequently wed styles, a jig-like melody superimposed over an African 6/8 rhythm. This is another of the previously unrecorded songs that we began playing shortly after Marcus joined the band. It's developed in a very organic way over the course of this last year as a result of our getting the opportunity to play it on a nightly basis. Herein lies one of the principle joys of being in a band. Each of us is encouraged to interpret and infuse the music with our own musical personality, regardless of who composed the song. Everyone's contribution is vital. Our goal truly is to make the whole greater than the sum of the parts. "Statue of Liberty" is a blues with a surprise B section. It was first recorded on our 1996 release, *Blue Hats* and has been a frequently performed tune since then. This particular version resulted from a spur of the moment decision. At the beginning of our final set, we all needed a boost. The previous two weeks had been very intense preparing for this recording. We had just returned from a grueling tour and additionally had been very busy taking care of all the business details related to producing one's own CD. Throw in daytime photo shoots and recording sessions and evening performances at The Mint and you begin to get the idea. As we walked onto the bandstand for the final set we all decided to rip up the set list and play a some tunes we had not yet played just to reinvigorate things. Both Runferyerlife and Statue of Liberty came from this impromptu decision. Each night we closed the sets with "The Evening News." Over the course of Marcus' tenure with the band it has become our set

closing tour de force featuring Bob's "Maceo Parker on steroids" tenor solo and the final coda which features Jimmy and Marcus "trading 8s." It never fails to stir the audience into a frenzy! It's almost become a game to see if we can all keep our places during the final frenzied moments as Jimmy and Marcus threaten to obliterate time. I hope you'll feel the same energy we all felt during this exciting performance.

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