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The Complete Blue Note Sam Rivers Sessions (# 167) (CD)

Text from mosaicrecords.com announcing this set:

The music of Sam Rivers. So multidimensional, we still haven't heard it all.

Here's our personal pitch on Sam Rivers. What lies at the heart of his creation is the same impulse that will help anyone appreciate it. It's what should be a part of any artistic experience. And it's certainly what activates us to do what we do at Mosaic.

One word - Explore

In the early '50s, that's what Sam was doing (in relative obscurity) in Boston, after formative years first in Little Rock, then Chicago. But the conservatory he was attending wasn't teaching the music and the tradition essential to his nature.

So Sam created his own course of study. And began to question the accepted concepts of modern music. What happens when you follow the line instead of the chord changes, or think in terms of hues instead of melodies? What if chords give way to clusters, and unrelated melodies are superimposed? What can be gained by composing for individual instrumentalists, instead of composing in the abstract? He explored completely improvised music, but not exclusively - segments of some compositions would be composed note for note at the piano and then transposed for Sam's saxophone and the other band instruments.

When Sam finally arrived in New York in 1964 to appear on Tony Williams' Blue Note debut, his musical ideas, technique and confidence were fully formed.

His own dates

After a summer with Miles Davis, Sam joined Blue Note, where it all blossomed. On Fuschia Swing Song, Contours, A New Conception and Dimensions and Extensions, Sam established himself as someone special among the avant- garde, a musician determined to extend the line, not break with it. Listening again now to his soloing reveals him to be the very ideal of the personal artist. He develops a song in stages, exploring the dynamics of attack and then slur, running freely and then with such intricacy you have no idea another aesthetic is within his grasp.

Later, as one of the leaders of the "loft jazz" scene in the '70s, Sam opened his home to spectators, where they could actually watch the creative process at work. When he was done with a song, you were convinced he got more out of it than anyone else could.

A composition evolves

This set gathers all four Rivers-led sessions as well as unreleased alternate takes. The three alternates on "Downstairs Blues Upstairs" followed by the master used on Fuschia Swing Song are a stunning example of a piece taking shape before your ears.

Sidemen were the best of the era - Freddie Hubbard, James Spaulding, Herbie Hancock, Jaki Byard, Ron Carter, Cecil McBee, Tony Williams and Joe Chambers.

The booklet includes Francis Wolff's photographs from the sessions, original liner notes and an essay by Michael Cuscuna.

"He was the one I really got a lot from, the one who really opened me up." - Tony Williams

Discography

All sessions were recorded at the Van Gelder Studio in Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. Only the original U.S. issue number is given.

(A) Sam Rivers (ts), Jaki Byard (p), Ron Carter (b), Tony Williams (d).

December 11, 1964

tk3 Fuschia Swing Song BST 84184
tk6 Cyclic Episode -
tk10 Luminous Monolith -
tk12 Luminous Monolith (alt take) unissued
tk15 Ellipsis BST 84184
tk17 Downstairs Blues Upstairs (alt take 1) unissued
tk18 Downstairs Blues Upstairs (alt take 2) -
tk19 Downstairs Blues Upstairs (alt take 3) -
tk20 Downstairs Blues Upstairs BST 84184
tk23 Beatrice –

(B) Sam Rivers (ts-1, ss-2, fl-3), Freddie Hubbard (tp), Herbie Hancock (p), Ron Carter (b), Joe Chambers (d).

May 21, 1965

tk6 Point Of Many Returns -2 BST 84206
tk10 Dance Of The Tripedal -1 -
tk12 Mellifluous Cacophony -1 -
tk18 Euterpe -3 -
tk25 Mellifluous Cacophony (alt tk) -1 unissued

note: On the original album, the third tune was misspelled Mellifluous Cacaphony".

(C) Sam Rivers (ts-1, ss-2, fl-3), Hal Galper (p), Herbie Lewis (b), Steve Ellington (d).

October 11, 1966

tk5 I'll Never Smile Again -1,-2 BST 84249

The Touch Of Your Lips rejected

tk17 That's All -2 BST 84249

tk18 When I Fall In Love -1 -

tk21 What A Difference A Day Makes -1, -2 -

tk23 Detour Ahead -1,-2,-3 -

tk24 Temptation -1,-2,-3 -

tk25 Secret Love -3 -

(D) Sam Rivers (ts-1, ss-2, fl-3), James Spaulding (as, fl-3), Donald Byrd (tp), Julian Priester (tb), Cecil McBee (b), Steve Ellington (d).

March 17, 1967

tk10 Paeon -2 BNLA 453

tk20 Precis -1 -

tk25 Helix -1 -

tk32 Effusive Melange -1 -

tk33 Involution -3 (omit tp & tb) -

tk34 Afflatus -1 (ts, b & d only) -

note: This album was originally intended for issue as Dimensions And Extensions (BST 84261), but was first issued 10 years later as part of the double album <SC>involution<XC>. The other half of that double album was an Andrew Hill quartet that has since been reissued on Mosaic 161. The above date was ultimately issued in the late eighties with its original title, cover art and catalog number.

Album index:

- BST 84184 Fuchsia Swing Song
- BST 84206 Contours
- BST 84249 A New Conception
- BNLA 453 Involution
- BST 84261 Dimensions And Extensions

Original sessions produced by Alfred Lion

Produced for release by Michael Cuscuna

Executive producer: Charlie Lourie

Recording engineer: Rudy Van Gelder

Mastered by Ron McMaster

All photographs by Francis Wolff

Design direction: Richard Mantel

Design production: InkWell, Inc.

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