

playing, marked by intensity, sophistication and fluidity, enhances Harrow's voice while never outshining it. Listeners will discover a range of moods and themes in intimate arrangements that allow the singer's voice to shine. "Self-Esteem" is playful and witty and "Dear Max" (inspired by F. Scott Fitzgerald's letters to his editor, Max Perkins) will make you laugh out loud. Standards including "I Thought About You" (Jimmy Van Heusen, Johnny Mercer) and "My Ship" (Kurt Weill, Ira Gershwin) sparkle with gentle, introspective clarity. The standout title track expresses a reflective maturity. The tone of the album is timeless yet contemporary, deeply personal yet inviting. Harrow's vocal style remains honest and genuine, with a focus on storytelling rather than display. Every note feels spontaneous and authentic and this album strikes a balance between a thoughtful examination of life's complexities and flashes of wit, optimism and even joy.

For more info visit [candidrecords.bandcamp.com](http://candidrecords.bandcamp.com) and [nancyharrow.com](http://nancyharrow.com)



*My Ideal*  
**Sam Dillon (Cellar Music)**  
by Scott Yanow

It is obvious from the start of the opening selection on *My Ideal*, the original "No Promises", that John Coltrane is tenor saxophonist Sam Dillon's primary inspiration. Dillon's technique is dazzling and he can play double-time lines with the speed and assurance of Johnny Griffin. Many of his ideas purposely look towards Coltrane, and while Dillon's sound is not quite identical, he certainly sounds like a close musical relative. However, when one plays with such a steady stream of inventive ideas and enthusiasm, the references and resemblance in styles are not necessarily a bad thing. Certainly his ferocious playing on "Path of Totality", one of four originals on this set (which alternate with four standards), is very much in his own voice.

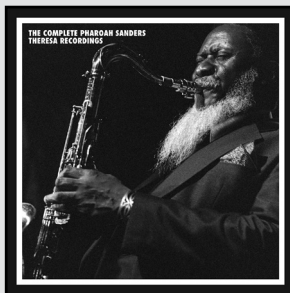
"No Promises" (a tribute to Coltrane's "The Promise") is filled with passionate sheets of sound tenor. "Softly, as in a Morning Sunrise" features Dillon hanging onto the chord structure while pushing against it and occasionally hitting upper register, altissimo notes that recall Ernie Watts. "Past Time" is a modal original while "Have You Met Miss Jones" has the leader's high-energy solo followed by a relatively relaxed and boppish statement from David Hazeltine (piano), a short spot for Alexander Claffy (bass) and a tradeoff with Rodney Green (drums).

One album highlight is the tenor saxophonist's opening cadenza on the title track. Another standout is the quartet's rendition of Cole Porter's "I Love You". Coltrane recorded a pianoless trio version in 1957, and Dillon recreates the setting and the introduction of that version before launching off on his own. The aforementioned "Path of Totality" and the blues-with-a-bridge original "SD Card" (inspired by "Traneing In") conclude this impressive set.

While one hopes that Sam Dillon becomes more individual in the future, *My Ideal* will certainly be enjoyed, particularly by Coltrane fans.

For more info visit [cellarmusicgroup.com](http://cellarmusicgroup.com). The album release concert is at Chris' Jazz Cafe (Philadelphia, PA) Oct. 3 and *The Django* Oct. 15. Dillon is also at Zinc Bar Oct. 8. See *Calendar* and *100 Miles Out*.

## BOXED SET



*The Complete Pharoah Sanders Theresa Recordings*  
**Pharoah Sanders (Mosaic)**  
by Marc Medwin

The more history is confronted, the messier it becomes. Lines blur and categories collapse while cause and effect fade in the simultaneously multivalent lights of discovery and rediscovery. Pharoah Sanders (1940-2022) was a musician well-versed in historical complexity and the means to overcome it. Just in time to celebrate what would have been his 85th birthday this month (Oct. 13), the inimitable Mosaic Records has boxed up a point of career definition. In the '80s, on San Francisco's independent Theresa label, the tenor saxophonist released a series of albums that document his immersion in all aspects of the music that fostered his talent, continued to spark his imagination and shaped the unique syntax he used to express it.

A word must first be said about the booklet. While Mosaic sets are known for their exemplary liner notes, Mark Stryker raises the stakes with a 10,000-word Sanders primer. Yes, we get all of the requisite biography and sociohistorical context, but, helpfully, Stryker first elucidates the sonic vocabularies forging the Sanders sound his fans relish, such as the multiphonics on the bridge of "I Want to Talk About You", recorded by drummer Idris Muhammad's pianoless group in 1980, a year after he played on Sanders' first Theresa session as a leader. Stryker also cites the freedom-screams informing the three versions herein of the aptly titled "You've Got to Have Freedom", suggesting that Sanders plays the political statements that interviews do not completely capture.

This introductory section can serve either as a listening guide in miniature for the individual sessions Stryker then chronicles or a launchpad for the many felicitous discoveries these albums afford. Each disc of this limited edition, seven-CD set is a kind of amalgam, ideas contrasted and connected as lush landscapes throughout, from which the fruits of collaboration are harvested. Sanders' *Journey To The One* (1980) brought then-recent Theresa to national attention, and with it Sanders modes of inquiry as reflected on this multifarious microcosm. Juxtapose the fiery groove of "Doktor Pitt" with the introspective musings of "Kazuko (Peace Child)" to mine the diverse territory a Sanders album might travel, and then revel in the trilling at 3:28 of "Kazuko" to hear how completely he inhabits that terrain, specifically a shimmering soundscape of koto, harmonium and bells. Suddenly, we're treated to the unexpected but delicious duet version of John Coltrane's "After the Rain", courtesy of Sanders and Joe Bonner, which anticipates the languid quartet take on "It's Easy to Remember", featuring Muhammad, pianist John Hicks and bassist Ray Drummond, two of the many souvenirs of Sanders' relationship with Coltrane peppering the set. If the keyboard- and vocal-heavy arrangement on "Think About the One" seems a bit dated, the tambura-driven "Solidate" places the music outside of temporal concern, Sanders' tenor

floating freely over the more frenetic rhythms of James Pomerantz' sitar.

The time and genre-bending gauntlet was thrown down, and the rest of the set explores aspects of these complex but rewarding historical symbioses. Whether you're in the mood for old, new, borrowed and all kinds of blue, it's all there. It's easy to gravitate toward the two live albums, *Live* and *Heart Is a Melody*, the latter including a blistering version of Coltrane's "Ole", especially to Muhammad's solo beginning at 13:19 or pianist William Henderson III's deep and glistening intro. Sanders' final of three solos finds him literally in voice, trading vocal motives with his customarily welcome saxophone squalls. If the synthesized chorus on "Body and Soul" from *Shukuru* (1985) isn't to taste, Sanders' gorgeous and adventurous solo (dig the moment at 2:26 when he leaves the key far behind!) soothes and invigorates by turn. It is wonderful to hear Leon Thomas with Sanders again, and his rich baritone vocal acrobatics are a treat as the rhythm section of Drummond and Muhammad provide affable support. The session exudes the mellow joy in musical communication in which getting lost is simple. Sanders tears it all up on the brief but poignantly and politically charged swing of "Jitu", which is perfectly balanced by "For Big George" (this live bonus track is actually "Goin' Home"). Anticipating Sanders' final statement, the achingly beautiful and justly-lauded *Promises* (2021), Thomas and Sanders emote over a multileveled drone as deep and timeless as each note they sing and play.

The last two discs in the set juxtapose Sanders' final recordings for Theresa with his first, then uncredited, because he was still under contract to Arista. *A Prayer Before Dawn* is the more interesting of the two, not least because it includes what might be considered the only "late" Coltrane tune Sanders offers, the wisdom-drenched "LivingSpace". Sanders drags more blues out of it than seems possible, digging the melody from deep underground. Henderson is all over this album (with the exception of guest pianist Hicks on "After The Rain") and provides exquisite and soulful harmonic support on this most spiritual of Coltrane's 1965 pieces; when the pianist's melody ascends in rippling arpeggio, Sanders sinks lower, and vice versa, exemplifying the layers of perfection embodying the relationships the saxophonist could have with his collaborators.

It is more than a privilege to encounter and revisit the music emanating from this period of transition as Sanders re-evaluated his historical perspective. Like Sun Ra, he brings special flavor to the standards he updates, and there are new sounds a-plenty to tickle the ear. Through it all, Sanders' saxophone lexicon is an open book of unpredictably imaginative reference, embracing the past while delineating a present of his making. The occasional rearing of commerciality's head does nothing to diminish the importance of a committed body of work in need of exactly the anthologizing Mosaic has given it. History is here, in all of its transcultural glory, accepting facile containment no more than does any one pitch, phrase or emotional line, peaceful or confrontational, that Sanders unleashes upon it. Established voices, like those of Bobby Hutcherson and Elvin Jones, cross paths with then-new talent, including the young Bobby McFerrin, to carry the concentric lineages forward. All that's left to do is to celebrate the man, these musicians and their legacy by listening again.

For more info visit [mosaicrecords.com](http://mosaicrecords.com)