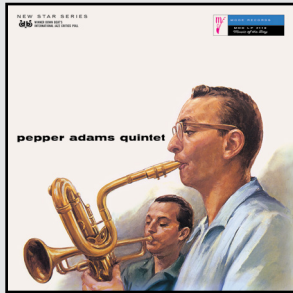


## DROP THE NEEDLE



**Pepper Adams Quintet**  
**Pepper Adams (Mode-Gammaut)**  
 by Fred Bouchard

Pepper Adams (1930-1986), who earned his spurs as baritone sax anchor in the blazing '50s big bands of Stan Kenton and Maynard Ferguson, breaks from the gate like a thoroughbred in his maiden lead race, *Pepper Adams Quintet*, recorded for Mode (Hollywood, 1957). Gammaut, for this its inaugural release, enshrines the original session with immaculately digitized masters (cut by the legendary Bernie Grundman at 45rpm in stereo), deluxe packaging (including never before seen photographs) and a revelatory 30-page biography by Adams scholar Gary Carner in this welcomed limited-edition 180gr vinyl reissue.

As a front-runner to codify and translate Charlie Parker's fleet and fluid bebop lexicon and lingo, Adams was just 19 when he met his idol Bird at a Detroit jam session, and discovered their mutual passion for composer Arthur Honegger. Adams' power chops

reflect his hard-won decade adapting Bird's alto to the balky bari, a horn, which writer and critic Stanley Crouch likened to a hard-to-break stallion. A respected member of the Detroit invasion of the LA studio scene, Adams at 26 bristles, ears perked in this tidy half-hour set with a snappy quintet of West Coast pals Carl Perkins (piano), Leroy Vinnegar (bass) and Stu Williamson (trumpet). Drummer Mel Lewis—fellow Kentonian and Adams' future boss in founding the iconic Jones/Lewis Orchestra—dryly propels the no-frills date of three pop standards and two perky Adams 32-bar minor bop tunes.

The five-take "Unforgettable" (the 1951 Nat "King" Cole tune reclaimed as a hit in 1991 by daughter Natalie) is taken at an easy clip with drawly tags, but scrappy Adams gallops 32-to-the-bar on a breathless idea track to lap the pack. "Baubles, Bangles and Beads" (Peggy Lee's 1953 hit from Broadway's *Kismet*) rides hell for leather with hot solos for all and fours with Lewis as the set showstopper. Adams cops "My One and Only Love" (Sinatra, Coltrane/Johnny Hartman) as a ballad feature. Note the burly romantic echoes of Serge Chaloff. "Freddie Froo", a fleet photo-finish with a tail-swish (sired by Bird's "Dexterity"), sees horns aloft, a nice taste of Perkins (who died too soon at 29), a drop of Vinnegar and Lewis' klook-mop. Easy-paced "Muezzin" drops Lewis' Latin toms during solos (Williamson trots, Adams bolts, Perkins sparkles) until the out-chorus horn vamp.

Mark your calendars: five years from this month is Adams' centennial.

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



**String Quartets**  
**Travis Laplante & JACK Quartet (New Amsterdam)**  
**The Golden Lock**  
**Travis Laplante (New Focus)**  
**Waterfall**  
**Sun & Rain (Out Of Your Head)**  
 by Brad Cohan

The range exemplifying the arc of saxophonist Travis Laplante's craft is boundless. His soul-baring language is spiritual exhilaration, ceremonial meditation, cathartic expression and hair-raising intensity via impassioned phraseology. Whether in groups Little Women, Battle Trance or Subtle Degrees, Laplante's compositely and improvisatory approach is deep, culled from a place of healing, beauty and heart.

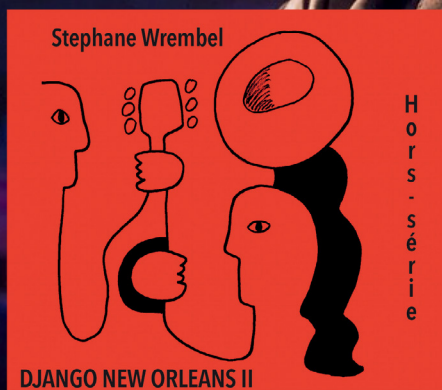
*String Quartets* is a singular entry in Laplante's canon; absent are his majestic tenor contours. Instead, he steps into, and masterfully commands, the composer role, enlisting JACK Quartet to decode his powerful mysticism, using two violins, viola and cello. What transpires on the set's two long-form movements (spread over four pieces) glistens with edge-of-your-seat suspense, hypnotic inflections, gorgeous elegance and profound expression. The NYC-based string quartet is Laplante's ideal kindred spirit, sonically, harmoniously and texturally. The heft of strings in his orbit furthers his emotive compositional prowess to new heights on "String Quartet I, p.1", ebbing and flowing from contemplative tones and ecstatic crescendos to harrowing melancholy during its seven-

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