



Meets Jerry Weldon
Cory Weeds (Cellar Music)

Horns Locked
Nick Hempton & Cory Weeds (Cellar Music)
by Ken Dryden

Since Canadian tenor saxophonist Cory Weeds founded Cellar Music in 2001, he has consistently released memorable jazz recordings, frequently featuring an American in the group or leading it.

Veteran tenor saxophonist Jerry Weldon joined for Weeds' *Meets Jerry Weldon*, on which they are accompanied by Miles Black (piano), John Lee (bass) and Jesse Cahill (drums) for a 2024 studio session that pays tribute to a number of past tenor greats. Two-tenor dates have a long, established tradition and this one stands up to any pairing over the past few decades. Starting with a rousing rendition of "Hey Lock!" (derived from the changes to "Body and Soul") by Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis, who played and recorded this with his tenor foil Johnny Griffin, the quintet here is firing on all cylinders. Clifford Jordan is represented with two of his originals, the slightly angular bop vehicle "Princess" (which Jordan recorded with saxophonist John Jenkins) and the rapid-fire "Toy" (a composition that has been covered by saxophonists ranging from Cannonball Adderley to Anthony Braxton). The latter showcases a superb solo by pianist Black in between the tenors of Weeds and Weldon. The band also finds

fresh approaches to standards, as in their laid back, funky treatment of the Gershwin's "Oh, Lady Be Good" (arranged by Bill Coon) and the loping setting of the Harry Warren ballad "I Had the Craziest Dream". Weeds' fiery original "323 Shuter" fits right in with the time-tested songs played on the date.

Another American tenor saxophonist, Nick Hempton joined Weeds for a pair of two-tenor sessions, one in 2023 at Frankie's Jazz Club in Vancouver, the other a 2024 in-studio recording. The two musicians are old friends who are on familiar ground playing together and enjoy their tenor battles, with both men coming out winners. Joined by organist Nick Peck and Cahill again on drums, these performances have a soulful flavor, starting with an invigorating workout of James Moody's "Last Train From Overbrook". Hempton's brisk blues "Change for a Dollar" features the gritty, hard-blowing guest first, then Weeds' spacious but no less powerful solo, with Peck and Cahill pushing the horn frontline to its limits. Dexter Gordon's Latin-tinged "Soy Califa" is one of his less frequently played works, but their soulful approach should rekindle interest in it. Weeds' "Conn Men" has the air of a set-closing blues, conjured up on the spot, with a playful, tongue-in-cheekiness to their solos. Cahill switches to brushes for the subdued Jimmy Van Heusen ballad "Polkadots and Moonbeams", with the soloists taking their time as if singing the lyric through their horns. Gene Ammons was famous for his tenor battles with Sonny Stitt and his "The One Before This" turns more soulful by replacing piano with organ. The oldest song of the session is easily 1928's "When You're Smiling", a tune more familiar on swing-oriented recordings. Weeds' loping arrangement gives it a country flavor, as if the band is conveying the image of an easy-going horseback ride.

For more info visit cellarlive.com. Nick Hempton is at Jazzcultural Wednesdays and Cellar Dog Apr. 7. He is also at Smalls Apr. 5 (with Hendrik Meurkens). Jerry Weldon is at Jazzcultural Apr. 8 and 22 (part of "Akiko Organ Nights"). See Calendar.

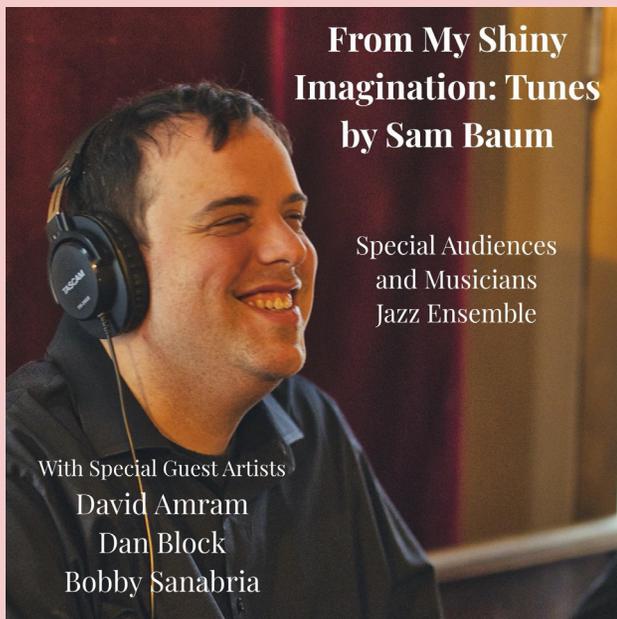


Stars
Martin Wind (Newvelle)
by Thomas Conrad

Stars presents an atypical all-star band. The leader, bassist Martin Wind, surrounds himself with no less than Anat Cohen (clarinet), Kenny Barron (piano) and Matt Wilson (drums). The album is notable because of its lack of pretension: its understatement, naturalness and integrity creates a unified whole. These are not qualities that all-star bands are generally known for. Another distinguishing feature is repertoire. The jazz art form today prioritizes original composition. Wind does something more musicians should do. He chooses from only his best tunes, in this case three. The rest of the program reflects creative decision-making. There are two attractive Duke Ellington compositions and a Bud Powell tune, all lesser known. There is also a Brazilian number for contrast, and an old, deserving standard.

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