

Mp3 Rick Holland - Kerry Strayer Quartet - Speak Low



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Straight ahead mainstream acoustic jazz 9 MP3 Songs JAZZ: Bebop, JAZZ: Traditional Jazz Combo

Details: Rick Holland Kerry Strayer Quartet Personnel Rick Holland trumpet, flugelhorn Kerry Strayer baritone saxophone Bob Bowman bass (2, 5-9) Todd Strait drums (2, 5-9) Ed Fedewa bass (1, 3, 4) Larry Ochiltree drums (1, 3, 4) featuring special guest: Frank Mantooth piano (2, 5, 7, 8) From Bobby Watsons liner notes: I have known Kerry Strayer since 1988 when I started to make trips back to Kansas City from New York to perform. I have always found Kerry to be a very straightforward and seriously dedicated musician. Since that first meeting, Kerry has continually honed and developed his skills to a very high level in both his individual voice as a baritone saxophonist and his awesome arranging abilities. His sound on baritone sax is both beautifully lyrical and quietly compelling. Kerry was born and raised in Nebraska and has been residing in Kansas City for the past 20 years, so it is no wonder that Kerry has a non-hurried Midwest feeling to his phrasing. Tempered by a West Coast flavor, it makes for a very relaxing and satisfying style of jazz. Kerry has chosen the perfect foil for this recording his long-time friend, trumpeter and flugelhornist Rick Holland. Rick possesses the same warmth, lyricism and intelligence in his sound as Kerry does. Likewise, the other world-class musicians chosen by Kerry and Rick exhibit the same sensibilities toward the music. Speaking with Kerry about this project he relates, Rick and I had been working together with his group in Michigan and had been playing a lot of the Gerry Mulligan/Chet Baker piano-less repertoire. We went into the studio with that concept in mind and recorded three pieces with Ed Fedewa on bass and Larry Ochiltree on drums, both of whom are members of Ricks working quartet. Later that year, Rick and I had just finished a week at the Great Plains Jazz Camp in Emporia, Kansas where we had been playing with Bob Bowman, Todd Strait and Frank Mantooth. We went into the studio with the idea of finishing the piano-less recording that we had started

in Michigan but felt compelled to invite Frank to play on some of the tracks as well. Hes such a great musician! The result is musica that is totally relaxed and without pretense, with careful thought and consideration for the way the chosen material should be presented. There is a deep maturity and confidence that is heard and felt throughout this recording. A maturity that allows each of the musicians to create and make musical statements without the bravado normally heard on recordings today. A confidence born out of knowing the history of the music, and in turn, bringing out the individuality of each player. Make no mistake, Kerry owes a huge dept to the baritone sax master Gerry Mulligan. He will be the first to tell you this. (Check out his release Jeru Blue: A Tribute to Gerry Mulligan on Palmetto Records) Listen to how the group captures the controlled excitement of the West Coast style on Bernies Tune and Three and One. Its one thing to imitate and another matter to have influences. Kerry has taken what he has learned from Mr. Mulligan and made it into his own. Check out his arrangement of Out of Nowhere the arrangement starting out with his own composition 3625 Central. It is this kind of assimilation of past influences that is required to perpetuat the art form called jazz into the next century. Mr. Jones and Swinghouse are two of my favorites. The chord-less ensemble employed on these compositions provides for a very relaxed freewheeling vehicle of expression. Rick and Kerry take full advantage. Frank Mantooth is one of the worlds finest pianists, arranger/composers and educators. His presence brings an added depth to the recording. Listen to his contributions on Speak Low, In a Sentimental Mood, Three and One and KASs Bllues. His rich accompaniment in addition to his inventive soloing opens the music up to a wide range of expression. Counts Place is a song that I play a lot on my gigs in Kansas City, Kerry explains. It's kind of like Count meets Monk. We had ten minutes left in the Michigan session, so I asked the engineer to turn on the tape, called a blues in C and started playing. I feel its one of the most interesting tracks on the recording. That being said, there is plenty of interesting music to be heard on this CD. The musicianship is superb and the feeling is honest and intelligent. With a definite nod to the West Coast innovators of the past, Kerry and Rick strive to move that sound forward into the present and prove as the young people say, It's all good. Long live jazz in all of its many colors, shapes and forms. Bobby Watson

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