

Mp3 Dan Fogel - 15 West



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Fogel takes original and standard compositions to new heights on the Hammond B-3 organ. This is a beautiful and powerful recording by a master jazz organist. 9 MP3 Songs JAZZ: Traditional Jazz Combo, JAZZ: Bebop Details: Dan Fogel: The Soul Force of the Jazz Organ By Nat Hentoff As Duke Ellington said, "It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing." But deeper than swinging is what musicians call "finding a groove" - a pulse that immediately moves an audience and lifts its spirits. One of the more infectious satisfying grooves in all of jazz are the room-filling sounds of a combo led by a master jazz organist as you hear in Dan Fogel's "15 West". Dan Fogel is in the invigorating tradition of Jimmy Smith, Wild Bill Davis, Groove Holmes, Jimmy McGriff and the other legends of the jazz organ. But he has his own passionate voice, and that didn't come from any academic setting where jazz was taught in a classroom. Benny Carter once told me, after visiting one of those colleges: "The students can cut any score, but I can't tell one from the other." The education Dan Fogel earned was from the sources of the jazz life, in the clubs. As he says, "This whole music trip started for me when I began shining shoes in front of the club Harlem on Kentucky Avenue in Atlantic City. At 10 years old, I couldn't figure out why, when Groove Holmes's 'Misty' came on the radio, I freaked out and wanted to play organ, Hammond B-3, of course. I started piano lessons that year." But the organ was indeed his true calling in the jazz life. As Pete Fallico wrote in the notes to Dan's earlier album "SOUL EYES," back then "Jazz organ coursework was unheard of in academia, so hanging out on Kentucky Avenue was the most effective and authentic way to learn." Also contributing to Dan's natural ease in communicating with an audience are his roots in a family of entertainers going back generations. His aunt, Helen Fogel Forrest, was one of the most personal and musical of the big-band singers. I still can hear her, in memory, with Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw. And her authenticity in jazz was connected to her understanding of the music's liberating

force whose roots were in the experience of its black progenitors. When Helen Forrest was with Artie Shaw, Billie Holiday was the other singer on the band. But there were theater and hotel owners who would not permit Lady Day to sing in establishments with a white band. So Helen Forrest refused to appear with Artie Shaw in Jim Crow rooms until Billie Holiday also came on stage. It would take me many pages to list all the places Dan Fogel has played in his extensive career, as well as the jazz luminaries with whom he has worked. But his peers know his stature. "Exceptionally gifted" is the demanding Max Roach's tribute. And from a younger generation, Joey DeFrancesco says it plain: "Danny plays the organ in the tradition of the masters." But the sounds that will surround you on "15 West" are beyond category. He does, however, revive that extra dimension of excitement that came from the past masters of the jazz organ who played in big-band style. As Dan explains, what you'll hear is "full organ" register chording and soloing that has been on records since those early glory days of the organ. His is the kind of jazz that lifts my spirits when nothing else will, making me move with it, and sometimes just shout in pleasure. And the grooving is in all kinds of moods and tempos. Dig the easeful, deeply relaxing feel of "It's You Or No One" and the intriguingly intimate mood of "Out of This World". On "Willow Weep for Me," turn the lights down low and yield to the fulfillment of romance. So too with "I Thought About You." And then dance out the set with "Broadway," even if you think you don't know how to dance. Adding to the emotional, harmonic and rhythmic dimensions of these embodiments of grooving are guitarist O'Donel Levy, tenor saxophonist Pete Chavez, and drummer Webb Thomas. Jazz, as Max Roach, used to tell me, is the very definition of democracy-collective improvisation in which distinctly individual voices interconnect into a transcendent whole. O'Donel Levy has worked with Jack McDuff but has headed many groups of his own, as well as demonstrating his range of skills on solo recordings. Tenor saxophonist Pete Chavez not only has a deep sense of the rhythm waves of this music, but also plays with a lyrical imagination on both ballads and up tempos, creating a rainbow of emotions. As for Webb Thomas, to stoke the fires of a Dan Fogel combo as its drummer/percussionist, you must have not only (expert) "chops" but also a deep appreciation of the heritage on which you've built your own way of telling jazz stories. When an interviewer once asked Webb Thomas his favorite drummer, the first one he mentioned was the dynamically inventive Chick Webb, whose band included Ella Fitzgerald as its teenage vocalist and-in a battle of bands with Benny Goodman's crew-Chick Webb swung the Goodman players out of contention. Webb Thomas honors the spirit of Chick Webb by having developed his own prowess as the groovemaker you hear in this session.

One of the clearest definitions of jazz I've ever seen came from the always surprising clarinetist, Pee Wee Russell: "It sums down to a certain group of guys-I don't care where they come from-that have a heart feeling and a rhythm in their systems that you couldn't budge. A rhythm you couldn't take away from them even if they were in a symphony organization. They could feel the beat beter than someone who has memorized the book." On "15 West,"these four guys who fit that definition are heard totally "live"-in a 19th century wooden church with a 50-feet ceiling. There are no overdubs here. This natural of jazz comes right at you, just as it came from Dan Fogel and his fellow groovers! -Nat Hentoff

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