



Wayne Shorter – Introducing Wayne Shorter  
Vee-Jay

Tenor saxophonist Wayne Shorter steps into the spotlight to begin August with his 1959 debut, *Introducing Wayne Shorter* (Vee-Jay VJLP 3006). As a child, Wayne loved music and was encouraged by his father to play the clarinet as a teenager. Shorter graduated with a music education degree in 1956 from New York University. While in the U.S. Army, Wayne played with pianist Horace Silver and after his discharge, worked with Gil Evans and Maynard Ferguson. He's also considered one of the greatest jazz composers and leads a blue-chip quintet. Lee Morgan on trumpet; Wynton Kelly on piano; Paul Chambers on bass and Jimmy Cobb on drums. All four would make significant contributions to the jazz world in the decade ahead. My copy used in this report is the 1977 Japanese Mono-Stereo reissue (UXP-92-JY) by Teichiku Records Company, Limited. Side One consists of three Mono tracks (*Blues A La Carte*, *Harry's Last Stand*, *Down In The Depths*), plus a Stereo version of *Blues A La Carte*. The songs on Side Two are all Stereo with an alternate take of *Harry's Last Stand*.

*Blues A La Carte*, the first of five Shorter originals is a midtempo tune giving everyone except Jimmy solo opportunities. The horns are subdued on the melody with Lee's muted trumpet on top of the carefree beat shadowed by Wayne and the rhythm section anchoring them. Shorter blends beautifully with the trio on a cheerfully vibrant lead solo. Morgan cruises into the next presentation with an infectious swing from his muted horn ahead of a clever climax. Kelly makes his mark next with a stellar performance of youthful vigor. Chambers delivers an alluring performance on the tune's last presentation moving sensuously towards the theme's return and subtle finale. The Stereo take of *Blues A La Carte* follows with a straightforward groove laid down solidly by Wayne, Lee, Wynton, and Paul in that order. *Harry's Last Stand* is a blowing vehicle that begins briskly, giving everyone solo space.

Wayne opens the first statement with warm tones. Lee expresses his thoughts next with the mute off on lines of enthusiastic excitement and creativity, followed by Wynton who makes a firm point on the next reading affirming a maturity far beyond his twenty-five years. Paul comes in behind him on a short rocking solo ahead of Jimmy who's sure and steady in an exchange with the leader, then cutting loose on a brief, dynamic display ending with a lively climax.

*Down In The Depths* ends the first side, opening with a vivacious theme statement. Shorter is up first with servings of mainstream swing seasoned well with hot notes and phrases. Kelly encompasses a mix of grace and fire that dances along smoothly, then Morgan takes us for a musical joyride with ample power glowing brilliantly leading to the coda. *Pug Nose* opens Side Two at a comfortable pace for some relaxed jamming on the bluesy melody. Wayne leads off with sweet and supple verses that are quaint, neat, and tidy. Lee steps in next, moving leisurely with an attractive richness in his tone that's a work of beauty. Wynton explores some interesting avenues supplementing the front line on the third reading. Paul makes a brief comment that's exquisitely polite into the closing chorus. *Black Diamond* is an uptempo swinger also affording everyone a solo opportunity beginning with the ensemble's blazing theme. Shorter goes first with an intensely hot performance, then Morgan supplies electrical energy on the next reading. Kelly says his piece with rapid aggression. Chambers adds some formidable bass lines and Cobb improvises in a brief exhilarating statement before the close.

*Mack The Knife* was written in 1928 by Kurt Weill, Bertolt Brecht, and Marc Blitzstein originally as a ballad for Weill's adaptation of *The Beggar's Opera*, a drama by English playwright John Gay, known as *The Threepenny Opera*. The song premiered that year at the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm in Berlin, Germany, and has been recorded numerous times. Lee lays out on this rendition that's vigorously swung by Wayne and the trio on the melody and continues on the saxophonist's feisty lead solo. Wynton delivers an exuberant performance of compelling intensity next, then Paul enters with a delightful statement and Jimmy contributes a short workout of great drum playing before the closing chorus and finale. The final tune is the Stereo reprise of *Harry's Last Stand* that flies as fast as the Mono take with everyone duplicating their solos in the same order.

Sid McCoy who was the Recording Supervisor at Vee-Jay Records is the man behind the dials on *Introducing*

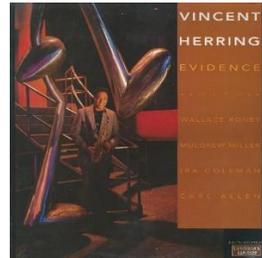


Wayne Shorter. Sadly, I don't know who did the remastering of his original tapes at Teichiku Records Company, but the sound quality is splendid for music eighteen years old at the time. The instruments come through your speakers vividly presented with excellent sound across the treble, midrange, and bass. I would like to point out the time shown for Down In The Depths on the back cover incorrectly shows ten minutes, thirteen seconds. The correct length is nine minutes, forty-one seconds and the difference between them is a brief, excellent solo by Paul Chambers appearing on an alternate take of Down In The Depths that can be found on the long out of print Mosaic Records CD-box set, The Complete Vee-Jay Lee Morgan-Wayne Shorter Sessions released in 2000.

For me, Introducing Wayne Shorter along with Caravan by Art Blakey and The Jazz Messengers were my introductions to this multi-talented arranger, bandleader, composer, and musician. Both titles I still enjoy very much, and each gets a good amount of time on my turntable. In closing, having the opportunity to listen to a group of this quality is always an exciting, enriching experience and Introducing Wayne Shorter is an excellent choice to begin your journey into his music if you're not already a fan. A word of warning though, once you listen, the album will most certainly and convincingly whet your appetite to hear more!

Caravan (Riverside RM 438/RS 9438); The Complete Vee-Jay Lee Morgan-Wayne Shorter Sessions (Mosaic Records MD6-202) – Source: Discogs.com

Mack The Knife – Source: JazzStandards.com, Wikipedia.org



Vincent Herring – Evidence  
Landmark Records

This next choice from the library is by alto saxophonist Vincent Herring who I first heard live at The 1992 Atlanta Jazz Festival while he was a member of The Nat Adderley Quintet. Their performance was a highlight of the AJF, and Herring's solos were breathtaking throughout the set, mesmerizing the crowd with his exceptional approach to improvisation and technical mastery. Evidence (Landmark Records LLP-1527) is the title of his 1991 LP and his second album as a leader. Accompanying him on the date are Wallace Roney on trumpet; Mulgrew Miller on piano; Ira Coleman on bass and Carl Allen on drums. The album opens with Mr. Wizard by Herring and pianist Larry Willis, swinging from the outset with an invigorating theme statement highlighting the interaction between the front line and rhythm section. Roney takes off first with a jet-propelled interpretation followed by Vincent who gives the second solo an energetic workout of searing fire. Miller speaks last giving his performance a fierce intensity leading to the exuberant closing chorus and abrupt ending.

The mood moves to a slower tempo for a beautiful treatment of I Sing a Song by trumpet player Tex Allen. This tune opens showing grace and politeness with a Bossa-Nova beat on the melody. Wallace leads off with a tender performance, Vincent follows with a sublimely soulful reading of poignancy and warmth that's seductively appealing. Mulgrew provides an equal mix of elegance, style, and depth on the closing presentation that leaves you wanting more at its conclusion. Stars Fell on Alabama, the 1934 jazz standard by Frank Perkins and Mitchell Parish is a thoughtfully provocative tribute to alto saxophonist Cannonball Adderley who originally recorded it on the 1959 album Cannonball Adderley Quintet in Chicago. Herring opens the soloing with a sweet lyricism like a rare vintage wine that has mellowed with age. Miller adds a touch of romanticism to the closing statement with a tenderhearted delivery matched by the evocative



supporting structure by Coleman and Allen. Voyage by pianist Kenny Barron ends the first side with a lively, uptempo beat by the quintet on the opening chorus. Herring solos first with a captivating fire-breathing performance. Roney bursts into the next reading with a blazingly hot attack of electrically charged energy preceding Miller taking the stage last for an effervescent statement into the reprise and ending.

Never Forget is Herring's second contribution to the album and a very pretty ballad by Vincent who expresses a voluptuous richness on the melody and affectionate intimacy on the first solo. Mulgrew gives a vivid example of his ability to communicate something special by caressing each phrase of the closing reading, making it truly distinctive and memorable for a deeply satisfying performance. The title selection, Evidence was written by Thelonious Monk in 1948, appearing as a single and on the 1955 album, Milt Jackson and The Thelonious Monk Quintet. The quintet adapts to the jazz standard with a happy groove exhibited in the opening statement by Vincent who shows a remarkable maturity beyond his age. Wallace continues giving great pleasure next with some easy blowing and articulate phrasing. Mulgrew strolls into the next reading swinging with rhythmic strength and vitality. Carl closes the solos in exchanges with all three soloists that are impressive, resourceful, and assured into the ensemble's exit. Soul-Leo by Mulgrew Miller is the final selection on this seven-song adventure opening with a joyous theme statement at a medium tempo. Roney speaks with a good deal of proficiency in the first interpretation. Herring generates an infectious groove on the second performance, then Miller provides the summation with an artfully suave melodic performance in advance of a few closing comments by Vincent before the close.

The engineer behind the controls on Evidence is Paul Goodman who has recorded many notable jazz albums for Atlantic, Cobblestone, Elektra Musician, MPS Records, Muse Records, Onyx Records, Prestige, RCA Victor, and Xanadu Records. The digital mastering is by George Horn who also has a lengthy resume of albums recorded at Fantasy Studios, Berkeley California, and his own company, George Horn Mastering. The quality of this digital recording is splendid with a natural soundstage for the instruments which surrounds your listening chair with sweet sounds. In his closing remarks of the liner notes, Orrin Keepnews who produced the album describes Vincent Herring as "a force to be reckoned with in the world of jazz". I can't find a flaw in that statement and will only

add that for the listener, Vincent's warm and intimate way with a song is indeed a satisfying and pleasing experience that supports the Evidence found in the seven selections on this album.

Cannonball Adderley Quintet in Chicago (Mercury Records MG 20449/SR 60134); Evidence (Blue Note 549); Milt Jackson and The Thelonious Monk Quintet (Blue Note BLP 1509/BST 81509) – Source: Discogs.com

Stars Fell on Alabama – Source: JazzStandards.com



James Leary – James  
Vital Records

VTL (Vacuum Tube Logic of America), as any audiophile knows is one of the finest makers of high-end tube audio equipment in the world and is well known for its preamplifiers, phono preamplifiers, integrated amplifiers, and power amplifiers. In 1991, David Manley, the company's founder (who began VTL in England, a decade earlier in 1981) began recording underrated, exceptional musicians utilizing their tube technology. There were twenty-four LP's recorded on his Vital Records and VTL (The Vital Sound) labels and all of them were created in Manley's newly designed recording studio with an incredible soundstage. If you have the equipment to properly audition them, the sound is breathtaking. The focus was completely on the music and sound on some of the titles, this LP came in two black twelve-inch cardboard sleeves with the album cover and musicians listed on the left side. Each record was also released as a CD-album possessing an astonishing sound. Submitted for your consideration now is an album by one of the best jazz bassists you may be unfamiliar with, James Leary.

The first of his two records for ViTaL from 1991, James (ViTaL 003) was unlike anything I ever heard before on an album when I first discovered it twenty-nine years ago. The front line for this unique septet is a five-piece string Bass Choir. James Leary plays a 1908 England



Hawkes-Panormo bass; John Clayton plays an Unknown French Rarity bass; Reggie Hamilton plays a Pollman German-Modern bass; Fred Tinsley plays a Bella Rosa Italy-Modern bass and Al McKibbon plays a 1620 Steiner bass (tracks: A1 to C2, D1 to D3). The quintet is anchored by Eddie Harris on tenor sax, vocals (track: C3); Billy Childs (track: C3), Todd Cochran (tracks: A1 to C2, D1 to D3) on acoustic piano; Clayton Cameron, Ralph Penland (track: C3) on drums. For his second LP as a leader, Leary offers the listener a musical medley of several standards and original compositions that will knock you out of your listening chair. My copy used in this report is the 1991 two-record set.

The album opens with a midtempo rendition of the Thelonious Monk & Denzil Best 1952 composition, Bemsha Swing. The tune first appeared on the 1953 LP, Thelonious and Monk featured it again on Brilliant Corners in 1957. Leary sets a lively mood leading the ensemble through the melody, then launches into a sparkling opening statement that swings freely. John creates something special next exhibiting plenty of energy that's extremely satisfying. Fred's gives the next reading an enthusiastic workout, and Al has his moment in the sun with an outstanding performance that shines brilliantly into the close. Among the highlights of the two-record set is Wes Montgomery's Bumpin' on Sunset. Fred Tinsley opens the song with an introduction of the main theme. The synergy between the Bass Choir manages the difficult task of reinterpreting a contemporary classic while remaining true to its endearing spirit.

On Quiet Fire by George Cables, the bassists introduce a vigorous main theme cementing the interaction each man shares with an unpredictable swing. Cochran's lead solo shows him at his most spontaneous on a lively reading filled with impressive lines of high energy. Leary follows, reinforcing his stature as one of the most substantial harmonic improvisers on his instrument. Clayton asserts a firm and engaging identity with charming commitment, and McKibbon packs a beefy and impressive punch on the closing statement. Wayne Shorter's Fall is given a breathtaking treatment as Leary leads the basses who state the melody simply with excellent timing and intonation alongside Cochran's gentle accompaniment in the background on the piano. James offers exquisite softness on the first solo. His tuneful conversation with Cochran and Cameron's subtle accompaniment is also affectionate. Hamilton also creates a deeply introspective work on the closing reading. There is a

freshness and resiliency to his playing with warmth, tenderness, and elegance into the song's luxurious climax.

Leary also writes as well as he plays, this is quite evident on I'm Walkin', one of six compositions by the bassist. This tune is loosely based on the 1957 composition by Fats Domino and Dave Bartholomew and is the only quartet tune on this album. Alongside the trio of Billy Childs on acoustic piano; Leary playing an 1858 Bernadel bass and Ralph Penland on drums; tenor saxophonist Eddie Harris also provides the vocals. Harris' voice dominates makes a striking improvisation on the midtempo melody backed by splendid accompaniment by the rhythm section. On the opening solo, Cochran's playing is consistently imaginative and very rewarding with polished skill. Harris' tenor sax explores the next reading with a fine, probing intelligence that's as satisfying intellectually as it is emotionally fulsome. Leary solos beautifully and succinctly on the closing statement with consummate proficiency ahead of the theme's reprisal led by Harris' scat. This foursome also appears on James II.

Another Leary original, L' Ear brings the bassists back to provide a splendid display of vibrant spontaneity as the Bass Choir plays the main theme. Cochran and Leary are the featured soloists, Todd is upbeat and spirited on the opening chorus with a deceptively relaxed approach while Leary sustains a steady, effortless flow of ideas on the closing performance that's very attractive. Throughout this album, James shines as an enduring commitment to straight-ahead jazz of the highest order that resists the repetitious tossing of choruses from each musician. It's everything you want in a Jazz album, nothing that you expect, and a noteworthy LP by bassist James Leary that will repay your listening with nearly eighty minutes of impeccable music, marvelously presented and beautifully recorded!

Brilliant Corners (Riverside RLP 12-226/RS 1174); James II (Vital Records ViTaL 005); Thelonious (Prestige PRLP 142) – Source: Discogs.com

Bemsha Swing, I'm Walkin' – Source: Wikipedia.org



The Fred Hersch Trio – Dancing In The Dark  
Chesky Records

I recently reacquainted myself with one of the most accomplished pianists in jazz. Fred Hersch has been playing since he was four, composing music since he was eight, and recorded over seventy original tunes. Fred's worked with many great musicians and vocalists, performed as a classical soloist with orchestras and in chamber settings plus led his own groups. He's also appeared at the Jazz Standard and Village Vanguard, has an extensive discography, and has been nominated for several Grammy Awards including one for the album I'm discussing to end August. I first heard this record at the 1994 Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. It was one of the most auditioned audiophile LP's heard on the turntables of various high-end manufacturers. Dancing In The Dark (Chesky Records JR 90) is a stellar album by The Fred Hersch Trio that I'm really happy to have in my library. Joining the pianist are Drew Gress on bass and Tom Rainey on drums. My copy used in this report is the 1993 US Stereo Audiophile pressing.

Side One starts with Dancing In The Dark, written by Arthur Schwartz and Howard Dietz. The song's first appearance was in the 1931 musical revue, The Band Wagon. It was later reprised in the 1953 film version. Fred displays a delicate touch on the trio's graceful melody, then goes right to the heart with a strong statement expressing happiness enhanced by Drew and Tom's supportive energy into a tender fade. I Fall In Love Too Easily is a 1944 song by Jule Styne and Sammy Cahn first heard in the film Anchors Aweigh a year later. The threesome eases into a tranquil opening chorus. Gress starts with a slow, seductive groove of beguiling warmth, then Hersch gradually builds gentle cascades into a passionately tender performance. Secret Love by Sammy Fain and Paul Francis Webster was first recorded in 1953 by Doris Day who also sang it in the musical film, Calamity Jane. The group takes this tune for a midtempo spin and each member gives an entertaining interpretation.

The first side concludes with If I Should Lose You, composed in 1935 by Ralph Rainger and Leo Robin. This song comes from the 1936 film, Rose of The Rancho. Hersch makes this a solo showcase, beautifully characterizing the melody into an intimate dialogue that casts a spell of sensual beauty ahead of an exquisite ending. Side Two starts with a spirited rendition of the 1948 Cole Porter composition, So In Love, first heard in the Broadway musical, Kiss Me, Kate. The mood is jubilant from the start of the trio's theme treatment, and Fred swings into an enthusiastic workout before the slow-tempo out-chorus. For All We Know is a song composed in 1934 by J. Fred Coots and Sam M. Lewis that's very popular among jazz and pop vocalists. Hersch lovingly performs the first chorus solo, then Gress and Rainey add their sinuous support to the remainder of the melody. Fred's infectiously grooving interpretation showcases the pianist's dazzling dexterity.

My Funny Valentine by Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart is one of the most beautiful songs ever written. It premiered in the 1937 Broadway musical, Babes In Arms. The trio paints on a subtle palette for the nostalgically tender theme. Fred's lead solo is thoughtfully elegant and Drew crafts a deliciously inviting reading preceding the pianist's reprise and soft summation. Dancing In The Dark was produced by David Chesky and Fred Hersch. The album was recorded by Bob Katz, engineered by David Merrill, Jeremy Kipnis, and Peter Cho. It was mastered at Record Technology Incorporated and pressed on premium 180-gram audiophile vinyl. It's a great demonstration record for your audio system with crystal-clear highs, a sharp midrange, and deep bass for a stunning soundstage. If you're a fan of piano jazz and enjoy the standards, I invite you to go Dancing In The Dark with The Fred Hersch Trio. Your ears will be rewarded with an extremely enjoyable album that's just right for a romantic evening with that special someone! Please continue to stay safe and take care of yourselves during the Coronavirus pandemic. I'll see you next month and Happy Listening Gang!