



The Duke Jordan Trio – Lover Man

In this installment from the library, I've chosen an album by pianist **Duke Jordan** (1922-2006) and his trio which was recorded in 1975, but not released until four years later in 1979. This underrated, extremely gifted musician has impressed me ever since I first heard his only album for Blue Note as a leader, 1960's **Flight to Jordan** (BLP 4046/BST 84046) and his earlier 1975 SteepleChase LP, **Two Loves** (SCS-1024). **Lover Man** (SteepleChase SCS 1127) is the companion to **Duke's Delight** (SCS 1046) which was also recorded at the same session, featuring the top-notch rhythm section of **Sam Jones** (1924-1981) on bass and **Al Foster** on drums, plus Richard Williams (1931-1985) on trumpet and Charlie Rouse (1924-1988) on tenor sax. My copy used for this report is the original Danish pressing and the LP opens with an uptempo treatment of **Dig** by Miles Davis (1926-1991). This jazz standard starts with a hip melody treatment, then Jordan makes every note count with a lively effervescence on the song's only solo that is vigorously tasteful to the last note. Up next is **Dancer's Call**, the first of two originals by Jordan, the trio introduces the song at a medium tempo for the theme statement. The composer opens with an intriguing improvisation, followed by Jones who sculpts the next statement with verses of articulate subtlety at a smooth pace. Foster steps into the spotlight last offering his own improvisatory stamina in a provocative series of exchanges with Jordan's

impeccable intonation and Jones' unrestrained lyricism.

Jordan's **Love Train**, begins with an enthusiastically joyful theme. Sam starts the solo presentations with an unaccompanied performance of extraordinary energy, illustrating the continuity of his musical thoughts through his skill as a soloist. Duke provides a most convincing performance with a swinging lightness, fueled by Al who closes the statements with melodically fresh ideas that are the epitome of precision and taste. **Lover Man** was written for vocalist **Billie Holiday** (1915-1959) in 1941, and Lady Day first performed it in 1948 on the 78-rpm album, **Distinctive Song Stylings** (A-652) for Decca Records. Her performance of the enduring standard by Jimmy Davis (1915-1997), Roger Ramirez (1913-1994) and Jimmy Sherman (1908-1975) is still considered the goal standard, inducting her version to the Grammy Hall of Fame in 1989. It has been played and sung by some of the greatest artists in the jazz, pop and soul genres. Jordan's elegant interpretation commences with a tender piano introduction, developing into a graceful opening melody by the trio that is exquisite. The pace picks up for the song's only solo performance by Jordan, a gorgeous interpretation as crisp as the cool night air with a soft mood, revealing the tenderness in his playing successfully.

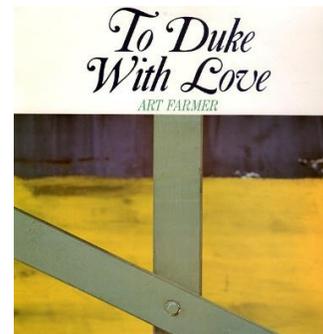
They Say It's Wonderful was written by Irving Berlin (1888-1989) for the 1946 Broadway musical, Annie Get Your Gun, and the song would also appear in the 1950 film version. This old favorite has also become a popular song in the jazz and pop genres as a vocal sensation, rather than an instrumental favorite. The trio presents the theme gracefully after a concise solo introduction by Jordan. Again, the pianist provides the only solo presentation and Duke does the tune justice with a tranquil swing which is as moving as it is soothing, thanks to the assistance of Jones and Foster who sustain the mood throughout; resulting in one of the prettiest performances on the record. The pace moves back to uptempo on the finale, **Out of Nowhere**, written in 1931 by Johnny Green (1908-



1989) and lyricist Edward Heyman (1907-1981). The song first became a hit after crooner Bing Crosby (1903-1977) recorded it the same year for Brunswick Records. Since its first recording, it is now considered a jazz and pop standard which has been recorded as a vocal and instrumental by many artists. The trio's interpretation starts with a short solo introduction by Jordan which segues into a delightfully happy opening melody. Duke goes first, delivering a robust opening statement of verses which are presented in a swift and agile manner towards a vigorous climax. Sam is up next and walks his bass with an exciting intensity, then Al concludes the proceedings with a scintillating statement at a rocking beat, emphasizing his energetic improvisation to a satisfying result and concludes the album on an upbeat note.

Lover Man was recorded by Chuck Irwin who was also at the helm of **Duke's Delight** which I've added to my infinitely long Want and Wish list. The sound on the LP is mesmerizing, moving the piano comfortably from your speakers into your sweet spot with the bass and drums beautifully arranged behind it for a lovely recreation of the instruments, resulting in an excellent recording. The CD counterpart of **Lover Man** (SCCD 31127) which hit the stores in 1992 adds an additional track to the original LP, a tune written by Al Foster titled **Sea**, which I would have loved to hear, but sadly, it was omitted from the record due to time length. A great pianist, an excellent repertoire and a superb rhythm section are three factors which make this album one of the best LP's I've heard this year. If you're not yet familiar with pianist Duke Jordan, it is my hope that you'll consider **Lover Man**, a perfect album to make his acquaintance for your library, especially if you're a fan of traditional trio jazz, or fans of Messer's Jordan, Jones and Foster, who in my opinion, clearly deserve a greater audience. This album has been out of print since 1979 for the Danish and Portugal releases (both share the catalog number SCS 1127) and 1993 for the Japanese reissue (UPS-2178-S)!

Lover Man, Distinctive Song Stylings, They Say It's Wonderful, Annie Get Your Gun, Out of Nowhere – Source: Wikipedia.com



Art Farmer – To Duke With Love

I was looking for an album to play during dinner a few nights ago, when I came across the 1976 album **To Duke With Love** (East West EW-8012) by one of my favorite trumpet and flugelhorn players, **Art Farmer**. I'd forgotten how much I enjoyed this album and after listening to it, began writing about it for this month's column. My copy is the 1978 Stereo reissue on Inner City Records (IC 6014) which is the 2nd US pressing, featured with Farmer who plays the flugelhorn exclusively on this six-song love letter to bandleader, composer, and pianist Duke Ellington (1899-1974) are pianist **Cedar Walton** (1934-2013); bassist **Sam Jones** (1924-1981) and **Billy Higgins** (1936-2001) on drums. Arthur Stewart Farmer (1928-1999) began his recording career in 1954 on the Prestige ten-inch album, *Work of Art*. He co-led The Jazztet with tenor saxophonist Benny Golson from 1959-1962; after the group broke up, had a successful twenty-year solo career until the band reformed in 1982 through 1986, then reunited with The Jazztet to perform live at festivals during the nineties. His capabilities on trumpet and flugelhorn were three-dimensional. At uptempo, Farmer possessed a firm-toned and steady attack, playing with tremendous fire and spirit while on a ballad or standard, he delivered a pensive restraint which always glowed warmly. At medium tempo, he could channel the irresistible energy of bop into surprising textures and piquant settings for



improvisation. Cedar Walton was an immensely gifted and prolific pianist who typically built up perfect solos from relatively simple ideas and whose style lent itself equally to large ensembles and small blowing groups where he proved an exemplary accompanist. Sam Jones had a beautiful sound on bass with an enviable technique and an interesting grasp of harmony, he was also one of the great players of mainstream jazz. Best known as one-third of the superb rhythm section (pianist Joe Zawinul (1932-2007) and drummer Louis Hayes) which was a rock-solid foundation for The Cannonball Adderley Quintet. Jones was among the first to make the cello sound plausible in jazz, while his sound on bass was equally rich, resounding and always engaging, whether he was the leader or sideman. Billy Higgins was the drummer of choice on some of the most memorable Hard-Bop and Free Jazz recordings in the history of the music. He appeared on over 700 recordings including albums in the genres of Funk and Rock. There was an unmistakable power in his playing, but when called upon, his accompaniment could also be elegant and haunting, bringing a further dimension to each recording, every time he sat behind the drums.

Side One opens with the enduring jazz standard, **In A Sentimental Mood**, written by Duke Ellington in 1935 with lyrics added later by Manny Kurtz (1911-1984). Farmer introduces the standard with an enticingly delicate melody, then solos impressively on the opening statement with an elegantly considerate reading matched by the trio's reflective accompaniment. Walton gets his chance to solo next and his interpretation prior to the theme's return is also sensitive and poignant. The 1931 Duke Ellington-Irving Mills (1894-1985) composition, **It Don't Mean a Thing** begins with an energetic introduction by Jones backed by just Higgins, before Farmer and Walton join in to collectively present the theme. Walton kicks off the solos after a brief riff by Higgins with a hot, uninhibited swinging reading, followed by Farmer who bristles with searing emotion on the next performance. Jones gets the last word with an

exuberantly expressive closing statement before the quartet returns for the closing chorus. The first side ends with **The Star-Crossed Lovers**, which first appeared on Duke Ellington's 1957 Columbia album, **Such Sweet Thunder** (CL 1033) as part of a twelve-part suite based on the works of William Shakespeare (1564-1616). This Ellington original gives Farmer a showcase to produce a hauntingly beautiful sound, etching itself in your memory as alto saxophonist Johnny Hodges' (1907-1970) sensuous playing demonstrated on the original song. Walton opens the nostalgic ballad with a luscious introduction which begins to build when Farmer negotiates the opening melody with sweetness in every note, then continues on the first reading with a subtle presentation. Walton also contributes a gorgeous reading and efficiently compliments the rhythm section's voluptuously sensual support into an attractive finale.

Ellington's **The Brown Skin Girl In The Calico Gown** which was first recorded with vocalist Ella Fitzgerald (1917-1996) on the 1965 Verve LP, **Ella at Duke's Place** (V-4070/V6-4070) opens the second side at a moderate pace with an introduction by Farmer accompanied only by Jones, ahead of the ensemble's relaxed treatment of the melody. Farmer sets the pace on the opening statement with a vivacious performance which moves at a soulful tempo. Walton on the closing statement affirms again his richly melodic, flawlessly swinging solo style while the rhythm section supports him with impervious jauntiness that reverts to the slow pace for the finale. The 1938 Billy Strayhorn (1915-1967) classic **Lush Life** is afforded a slow, meditative treatment by the quartet during the main theme. Strayhorn began composing the jazz standard in 1933 but fine-tuned the song over the next five years until 1938 when he performed it for Duke Ellington, who hired him afterwards beginning their iconic music collaboration until Billy's death in 1967. The song's lyrics describes the author's weariness of the nightlife after a failed romance. It has also been performed and recorded by some of the best musicians in the genres of jazz, pop and soul, ultimately becoming Strayhorn's other



signature composition alongside Take The A Train. Here, Farmer improvises from scratch by painting a palette of delicacy on the opening solo with colors of elegance masterfully provided by the trio's interplay and silk smooth textures from his flugelhorn as each chorus unfolds. Walton infuses the next solo with tender beauty in a skillful expression of love which weaves together soul and sound into exquisite moments of artistic improvisation.

The final selection, Duke Ellington's **Love You Madly** was written in 1950 and featured on the 1974 Pablo Records album, **Duke's Big 4** (2310-703) featuring guitarist Joe Pass (1929-1994); bassist Ray Brown (1926-2002) and drummer Louie Bellson (1924-2009). After a short piano introduction by Walton, the ensemble provides a happy aura led by Farmer who gets into a good midtempo groove on the opening melody and first solo with an impeccable tone and relaxed approach that's as good as it gets. The closing statement by Walton is equally lively and imaginative with such skill and flair, that's also an absolute joy. **To Duke With Love** was originally recorded in 1975 by East-West Music in Japan, less than one year after Duke Ellington passed away. Art Farmer was beginning to use the flugelhorn exclusively and the superlative remastering of Ben Taylor's original recording by Stan Ricker at the JVC Cutting Center in Hollywood, California captures all the quality of his tone. The Inner City reissue is an LP that can be found inexpensively if you don't already own either the original 1976 US and Japanese pressings (both use the catalog number EW-8012) on East-West. Finally, **To Duke With Love** is a well-executed and enjoyable recording by Art Farmer that's a love letter set to music to honor of one of the greatest composers of all time, Duke Ellington and a record I recommend for a spot in your library!

Arthur Stewart Farmer, In A Sentimental Mood, It Don't Mean A Thing, The Star-Crossed Lovers, Such Sweet Thunder, The Brown Skin Girl In The Calico, Ella at Duke's Place, Lush Life, Love You Madly, Duke's Big 4 – Source: Wikipedia.com



Paul Gonsalves – Gettin' Together

I confess to a fondness for the tenor saxophone among my favorite Jazz instruments to enjoy on LP, and this 1961 release on Jazzland which I'm submitting for your inspection is just what the doctor prescribes to provide the subject of this report. **Paul Gonsalves** (1920-1974) was one of the most proficient tenor saxophonists in modern jazz whose sound and style stood beside master saxmen Chu Berry (1908-1941); Don Byas (1912-1972) and Coleman Hawkins (1904-1969). This talented tenor man however was no imitator, he was an original pioneer who began experimenting with various tonalities like John Coltrane's legendary "sheets of sounds" years before Coltrane (1926-1967) began conducting his own tonal investigation. He's best known for the electrifying extensive solo of 27 choruses on **Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue** at the 1956 Newport Jazz Festival that not only immortalized him as one of the greatest players to ever pick up the horn but resulted in one of the biggest selling albums ever for the renowned bandleader, composer and pianist, Duke Ellington (1899-1974), **Ellington at Newport** (Columbia CL 934/CS 8648); released the following year. In 1961, he would record his second album as a leader for the Riverside subsidiary label with a quartet of premier musicians from two of the most prominent small groups in jazz at that time; cornetist **Nat Adderley** (1931-2000); pianist **Wynton Kelly** (1931-1971);



bassist **Sam Jones** (1924-1981) and drummer **Jimmy Cobb**. Adderley and Jones worked with Nat's brother in The Cannonball Adderley Quintet, while Kelly and Cobb formed two thirds of the rhythm section of The Miles Davis Quintet.

My copy of **Gettin' Together** (Jazzland JLP 36/JLP 936S) is the 1985 Original Jazz Classics reissue (OJC-203 – J-936) and is the third US Stereo pressing. The album opens at midtempo with the 1946 torch song, **Yesterdays** by Jerome Kern (1885-1945) and lyricist Otto Harbach (1873-1963). The rhythm section establishes the mood gracefully to introduce the jazz standard. Gonsalves states the melody first; then blends beautifully with Adderley's muted cornet showing splendor and elegance as the theme unfolds. Kelly opens the solos at a relaxed rhythmic swing that's softly enunciated. Adderley follows with a whispery, delicate pitch exhibiting his lyrical capabilities with tender restraint. Gonsalves saves the best for last on the closing presentation with two inventive choruses of persuasive gentleness. **J. & B. Blues** by Joe Livramento; the first of three uptempo tunes on the LP is off to the races from the start with a speedy rendering of the melody. Paul leads off the solos with an exciting interpretation revealing his astonishing range and energy. Nat unleashes his high-octane virtuosity on the next reading and Kelly cooks with fire on a passionately swift solo statement. Cobb blazes through the closer standing out like a beacon with confident brilliance showing evidence of the marvelous interaction he shares between Gonsalves and Adderley who trade melodic phrases with the drummer in front of the theme's reprisal and abrupt end.

The 1931 Jazz and Pop standard, **I Surrender Dear** by Harry Barris (1905-1962) and Gordon Clifford (1902-1968), the first of three quartet numbers are superbly interpreted by Gonsalves and the rhythm section. The saxophonist opens the ballad unaccompanied with a luxuriously fine presence and sumptuous sound; the trio joins him providing the well-constructed foundation underneath Paul's elegant

statement of the melody and harmonically provocative opening chorus. Kelly responds with a short, tenderly expressive reading presented with proficient taste and poetic sensibility to the incredible warmth from Jones and Cobb's lush supplement. The first side ends on an upbeat note with Gonsalves' **Hard Groove**, a solid cooker launched by a fierce introduction by Cobb, prior to the ensemble's delivery of the melody at a cracking pace. Gonsalves leads off the solos by providing the concentrated heat of this uptempo gem with a scintillating opening statement. Adderley returns to the mute for the next solo and sparkles on a glowingly hot reading of relentless voracity and fervent enthusiasm. Kelly follows with an intensely provocative statement that really smokes while flowing in a unified, effortless groove and raises the temperature for the horns who return for a few irresistibly explosive riffs before the quintet returns to the closing theme and song's finale.

Low Gravy, the first of two compositions by jazz vocalist, Babs Gonzales (1919-1980) kicks off the second side. This tune is a midtempo blues that establishes the quintet's imaginative ability to change gears, while retaining a lyrically innovative beat which is pleasing to the ear. The rhythm section sets the mood on the introduction and the horns invite the listener to join the group on this bluesy quest which flows at a tranquil tempo. Gonsalves leads off the readings responding warmly to the musical beat with a firm-toned, folksy tenor solo that's as smooth as butter on toast. Adderley returns to the open cornet for the next statement and compliments the leader with some down-home cooking that's an excellent display of his rhythmic subtlety and endearing depth of emotion. Kelly continues the laid-back pace on the third interpretation, capturing the character of this music very well with a groovy lick and phrasing so clear, it's velvety soft and rhythmically moving. Jones ends the solos with an alluring, innately graceful performance on the song's final statement that concludes with a sensuously moving ending. The jazz standard, **I Cover The Waterfront** by Johnny Green (1908-1989) and Edward Heyman (1907-1981) was

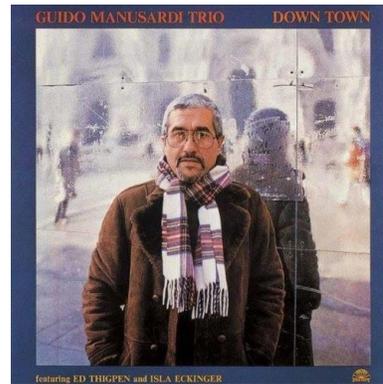


composed in 1933 but is inspired by the 1932 novel by Max Miller (1899-1967). It's the second quartet piece on the album and shows off Gonsalves' skills with a ballad on one of his favorite tunes to play. This evergreen commences with a cascading flow of notes from Kelly's piano into a peerless display of sensitivity in the saxophonist's sound on the opening melody and soothing lead solo. The pianist's playing on the next reading is allowed its clearest expression, and he relishes his opportunity by submitting a statement rich in tonal elegance and refined improvisation.

The title tune, **Gettin' Together** written by Babs Gonzales returns the quintet to an uptempo pace and opens with an exceptional rhythmic swing on the opening melody by the ensemble. Adderley solos first on the open cornet and is at his most robustly resourceful on the crisp, biting opening statement. Kelly skillfully makes a pertinent comment of unrestrained excitement on the next reading and Gonsalves peppers the closing statement with lively choruses of strength and assurance that meticulously soars over the rhythm section. The album closer and final quartet tune is the contemporary jazz classic, **Walkin'** by arranger, composer, songwriter, Richard Carpenter; best known as one half of the sibling Pop Vocal duo The Carpenters, alongside his sister Karen Carpenter (1950-1983). The quartet opens the song with an aggressively expedient introduction to get this speedy ride started. Gonsalves launches the solos with a vigorously spicy reading that's blisteringly hot, steering a nice course for Kelly to follow on the next reading and he continues to surprise with an impressive presentation which makes full use of his boppish energy. Cobb also gets a chance to stretch out on the closing statement with an impeccably resilient sense of time, prior to the theme's return and Cobb's fueling the energetic emotion of the quartet to the sudden finale. **Gettin' Together** is a significant album by Paul Gonsalves that's exceptionally presented by this talented quintet, excellently recorded by Bill Stoddard of Bell Sound Studios that can be found inexpensively, and a record I'm sure will be able to provide many hours of

enjoyable listening as a handsome addition to your jazz library.

Yesterdays, I Surrender Dear, I Cover The Waterfront, Walkin' – Source: JazzStandards.com, Wikipedia.com



The Guido Manusardi Trio – Down Town

This morning's entry from the library takes us to the city of Milan, Italy where Italian pianist **Guido Manusardi** is recording an album titled, **Down Town** (Soul Note SN 1131) which shares its name with the restaurant in the Galleria where Manusardi plays solo piano. Manusardi is one of the incomparable musicians whose consistency on record is outstanding. His effervescence while presenting contemplative improvisations with an exceptional understanding of the piano's capabilities has always managed to blend perfectly in the company of musicians including Roy Eldridge (1911-1989), Red Mitchell (1927-1992), Bobby Hackett (1915-1976), Art Farmer (1928-1999), Don Byas (1912-1972), Dexter Gordon (1923-1990) and others he's recorded with over his nearly five-decade career. I was introduced to his music on this album submitted for your approval, my copy is the original 1986 Stereo pressing and only release issued on LP. Joining the pianist are the Swiss jazz bassist, **Isla Eckinger** who demonstrates a great integrity of the musical line through his ability to produce a sound of luminous beauty at fast, medium and slow tempos. The drummer is **Ed Thigpen** (1930-2010) who needs no



introduction to anyone who has the music of Ella Fitzgerald (1917-1996), Oscar Peterson (1925-2007), Bud Powell (1924-1966), Dinah Washington (1924-1963) and others in their libraries. Thigpen could swing straight ahead with a touch on the drums that was strong, but not heavy and his rock-solid beat is the foundation that sustains the happy, relaxed mood of this set.

The first of four compositions by the pianist, **Downtown** starts this jazz journey in good spirits with theme statement by piano and rhythm at a mellow swing. The pace picks up on the opening interpretation with much of the solo space devoted to Manusardi who delivers a detailed mixture of form and improvisation with efficient skill. Eckinger takes the spotlight next for the closing reading and though brief, displays his rhythmic virtuosity on a melodic performance that is quite attractive. Thigpen holds the song together and is content to play the drummer's role by supporting the two principal soloists, prior to the final chorus. **Alexandra**, also by Manusardi is a very pretty ballad which is a stunning centerpiece for the pianist who is the song's only soloist. His performance of sincere elegance and grace illustrates his originality as a ballad composer and is gorgeous with intimately delicate groundwork supplied by the rhythm section. The pianist's **Fairway** is the first side finale and is ablaze from the pulse-quickenning introduction by Thigpen. After a vigorous delivery of the main theme, Manusardi leads off the solos with an exceptionally energetic statement which weaves interesting lines through each verse, resulting in an expedient paced, up-tempo excursion. Eckinger follows, with an assertive, pulsing presentation which only fuels Thigpen to raise the energy level higher with a brisk transient attack on the drums which ends a very satisfying and emotionally moving closing performance.

The medium fast beat continues with the 1935 standard, **My Romance** by Richard Rodgers (1902-1979) and Lorenz Hart (1895-1943) which opens side two. The trio starts at a medium tempo to mark the

opening melody, Manusardi opens the solos with a presentation which permits his fingers full sway in one of the joyously happy performances on the album. Eckinger responds accordingly with incisively strong lines of well-executed improvising on the next reading. Thigpen gets the last word on the final statement, emphasizing his rhythmic muscle and abundant lyricism to scintillating effect. **Dino's Mood** by Manusardi is a lovely ballad which allows the pianist another opportunity to weave a magic mist of notes as the lone soloist with a soft-spoken spirit that is lovely. Both bass and drums provide the gentle groundwork behind the pianist, allowing him just to play, which he does with elegant feeling into a tender culmination. The set closer is the 1957 jazz composition, **The Meaning of The Blues** by Bobby Troup (1918-1999) and lyricist Leah Worth. Manusardi's lone interpretation is delivered to sheer perfection, enveloping the listener with exquisite beauty and melancholy poetry which concludes with a tender finale and completes this collection of thoroughly satisfying jazz.

The solos on each selection of **Down Town** speak volumes and are made even more enticing by the exceptional interaction between Manusardi, Eckinger and Thigpen. The album is also superbly recorded by engineer Giancarlo Barigozzi with an open and airy soundstage; stunning sound and incredible definition of each instrument. If you're unfamiliar with pianist Guido Manusardi, **Down Town** is an excellent place to make his acquaintance; especially if you love the traditional jazz trio of piano, bass and drums. Long out of print in both LP and CD formats since 1987, your diligence in seeking the album out for your library or collection will be rewarded with nearly 37 minutes of jazz which still sounds as fresh as it did three decades ago by **The Guido Manusardi** Trio on a stellar LP that is highly recommended!

My Romance, The Meaning of The Blues – Source: JazzStandards.com