



Stanley Turrentine With The Three Sounds – Blue Hour
Music Matters Jazz

In the hands of **Stanley Turrentine**, the tenor saxophone was an instrument of soulful creativity and immense power. From his 1960 Blue Note debut, **Look Out** (BLP 4039/BST 84039) through his biggest hit for CTI Records, **Sugar** (CTI 6005) in 1971, Turrentine's credentials were second to none as a giant in the genres of Hard-Bop, Modal and Soul-Jazz. The subject of this discussion places the tenor man in the company of **Gene Harris** on piano; **Andrew Simpkins** on bass and **Bill Dowdy** on drums who were collectively known as **The Three Sounds** for a program of the Blues. **Blue Hour** (BLP 4057/BST 84057), originally released in 1961 is the second of only two records where The Three Sounds would back a saxophonist. The first LP was 1959's **LD + 3** (BLP 4012/BST 84012) with alto saxophonist **Lou Donaldson**. My copy used in this report is the 2015 Music Matters 33 1/3 Stereo reissue (MMBST-84057). The 1930 song, **I Want A Little Girl** written by Murray Mencher and Billy Moll leads off the first side. This infrequently heard ballad opens with an angelic introduction by the trio, exhibiting Harris' attentiveness to the lyric and melody. Stanley joins in for the theme with a quiet sincerity in his approach, then delivers a graceful performance which captures the essence of this standard on the initial solo. Harris' interlude is brief, but lovely and the closing by the quartet is especially beautiful.

Gene Baby, Ain't I Good To You was written in 1929 by Don Redman and Andy Razaf. The song became a jazz standard in 1943 after **Nat King Cole** recorded it with his trio. The Three Sounds provide a nostalgic mood with a pensive introduction, allowing Stanley to deliver the melancholy melody with feeling. Turrentine starts the solos tastefully, enhancing each verse with subtle lyricism which reaches a

peak of sensitivity at its conclusion. Harris instills the closing presentation of this standard with new life on an interpretation of intimate warmth which is a work of beauty. The only original on the album ends the first side, Gene Harris' **Blue Riff** takes the tempo to a medium beat during the opening chorus which moves with a finger-popping, toe-tapping groove. The Sounds' introduction sets the mood for Stanley to create some jubilant phrases on the opening statement with a vivacious spontaneity which builds to a successful summation. Gene takes the next turn for a cheerful presentation of joyful swinging with a youthful spirit which is also delightful. Stanley returns for a few final verses of soulful riffs, prior to Gene leading the trio into a fadeout.

The 1945 jazz and pop standard, **Since I Fell For You** by Buddy Johnson opens the second side. Johnson wrote both the music and words of this very beautiful ballad, and first introduced that year it with his sister Ella on vocals. This evergreen is one of the most recorded songs in jazz and pop and has been performed by many of the greatest musicians and vocalists in both genres. The Three Sounds start the song with a stylishly soft, slow-paced introduction as natural as if the song was written for this album exclusively. The trio segues into a soothing opening melody by Turrentine who solos twice, delivering tasteful and tranquil restraint on the first interpretation and closing chorus. Harris contributes a luscious reading which is lovingly stated with tenderness. Simpkins and Dowdy's accompaniment is richly satisfying behind Gene as he performs each voluptuous verse. One of my favorite standards, **Willow Weep For Me**, written by Ann Ronell in 1932 opens with the exquisitely mellow tone of Stanley's tenor sax leading the quartet through the main theme for one of his definitive ballad performances on the LP. Gene's opening statement is a gorgeous, midtempo reading which compliments his colleague's exceptional groundwork into an alluring culmination. Stanley's closing performance starts at a poignant pace with a firm introspective tone, followed by a graceful swing which takes the tune down smoothly into a luscious finale.

Pianist **Gene Harris**, who was known for his gospel jazz style formed **The Three Sounds** in 1956 with **Andy Simpkins** and **Bill Dowdy**. The group became a hit with the public and by the time **Blue Hour** was recorded, the trio was amid a four-year run (1958-1962) recording a total of twelve albums for Blue Note including four in 1960 alone, which is why I believe Alfred Lion didn't release the additional eight songs available on the 2000 two-CD album after this record hit the

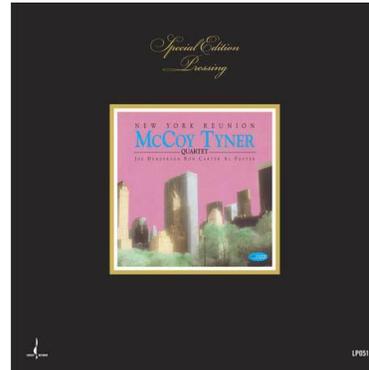


stores. The Three Sounds' would be together until 1970, when Harris would leave to embark on a successful solo career. **Stanley Turrentine** was a veteran tenor saxophonist of the Soul-Jazz style since the fifties and he would record a total of seventeen LP's for the label as a leader, plus several as a sideman including guitarist **Kenny Burrell** on **Midnight Blue** (BLP 4123/BST 84123); pianist **Horace Parlan** (1931-2017) on **Spur of The Moment** (BLP 4074/BST 84074). Three with organist **Shirley Scott** (1934-2002) who he was married to at the time, **Never Let Me Go** (BLP 4129/BST 84129); **A Chip Off The Old Block** (BLP 4150/BST 84150) and **Common Touch** (BST 84135). One with pianist Horace Silver (1928-2014), **Serenade To a Soul Sister** (BLP 4277/BST 84277) and three with organist **Jimmy Smith** (1928-2005), **Midnight Special** (BLP 4078/BST 84078); **Back at The Chicken Shack** (BLP 4117/BST 84117) and **Prayer Meetin'** (BLP 4164/BST 84164).

In his liner notes, noted author, jazz historian and journalist **Ira Gitler** offers one definition of the Blue Hour as that early morning time "when you reach across the pillow where your Baby used to lay" and find to find him (or her) there. The sound on this LP is stunning, the remastering of **Rudy Van Gelder's** original tapes by Record Technology Incorporated is also superb and the gatefold photos of each musician during the session compliments the music marvelously. What I've found the album to be is nearly thirty-eight minutes of blissful jazz by **Stanley Turrentine** and **The Three Sounds** that adds weight to any jazzy library and is an LP you can enjoy at any time of the day, the evening or the early morning during the **Blue Hour**.

I Want A Little Girl, Gee Baby, Ain't I Good
To You, Since I Fell For You, Willow Weep
For Me – Source: Wikipedia.com

Pianist Gene Harris – Source: www.musicmattersjazz.com



The McCoy Tyner Quartet – New York Reunion
Chesky Records

I've always enjoyed the music of **McCoy Tyner**, from his five years with The John Coltrane Quartet to his many years as a solo performer. This subject submitted for your consideration is one of my favorite LP's by the illustrious pianist. It is titled **New York Reunion** (Chesky Records JD 51) and was originally released in 1991! The album is a gathering of old friends who are united again after a nearly twenty-five-year separation of playing together. My copy used in this report is the 2016 Full Digital Stereo reissue (LP 051). There's a wonderful feeling of interaction from each member throughout each song on this LP and Tyner always manages to find something new, different or interesting to say in each of his albums. The other members of this distinguished quartet are Joe Henderson (1937-2001) on tenor sax; Ron Carter on bass and Al Foster on drums.

The first side starts with **Recorda-Me (Remember Me)**, written by Joe Henderson in 1955 when he was 14-years old. This tune made its first appearance on his 1963 debut LP, **Page One** (Blue Note BLP 4140/BST 84140) featuring Tyner on piano. This Henderson original has become a jazz standard and affords everyone solo space. It commences with an Bossa-Nova flavored introduction by Ron, Al and Joe who are joined by Tyner for the theme. Henderson molds each note of the first solo in a happy, spontaneous fashion. McCoy has his say next, with an incredibly direct and lyrical statement that segues perfectly into Ron's reading. The legendary bassist whets the listener's interest with some exquisite ideas on the next presentation. Al ends the interpretations with a perfect mix of heat, heart and humor on the song's final solo which is superbly put together. **Home**, the first of two original pieces written by Tyner especially for this date opens at a medium beat with



a jubilant groove and a concrete rhythm by the quartet which plays to perfection as the melody unfolds. The emphasis here are the featured solos by Henderson and Tyner with Carter and Foster maintaining the mood. Joe is up first with a majestic opening solo which is captivating from the start and one of his best improvisations on the album. Tyner goes next, his closing interpretation brimming with an equally agile style, preceding the quartet's return for the close and fadeout.

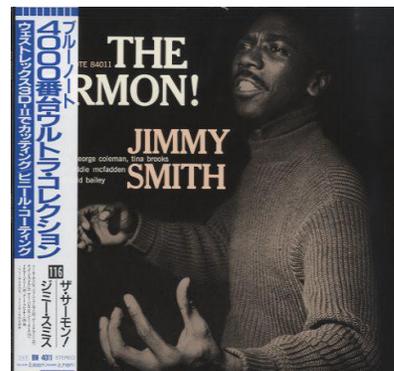
The second side begins with the 1951 jazz standard **Ask Me Now** by Thelonious Monk. This gorgeous ballad made its first appearance on the 1952 10-inch album, **Genius of Modern Music, Volume 2** (Blue Note BLP 5009) and would reappear on the 1956 LP edition (BLP 1511). It is interpreted here as a duet and shows that the two musicians know how to inspire each other. Monk's classic opens with a stunning four-minute solo introduction by Joe Henderson, then Tyner joins him for the elegant melody statement. Joe delivers a tender, affectionate performance which is lush, lovely and completely captivating. McCoy moves into a slow mood of serenity on the closing presentation with a lovely treatment capable of melting the hardest hearts while satisfying anyone with sophisticated ears. The final track, **Miss Bea (dedicated to Mother)** is the second original by Tyner and returns the quartet to a midtempo pace. As the title suggests, this tune is a touching tribute to Beatrice, his Mom who also played the piano and encouraged him when he was younger. The trio's sprightly introduction kicks things off for Henderson who leads the quartet with a lively prance through the melody that lets you know from the start how much they enjoyed playing together. Tyner takes the opening solo, each verse scintillating and surging with assurance and power, resulting in an intriguing performance. Henderson navigates through each phrase of the final statement for a passionate presentation which is not only refreshing but rewarding as well.

The original recording was achieved by **Bob Katz** who used a specially modified microphone with all tube Manley Reference electronics from David Manley of Vacuum Tube Logic of America. Although I haven't heard the original 1991 LP, I'm very impressed with the soundstage on this reissue. It is wide and deep with the instruments sounding as they should, crisp and natural with good harmonic structure. At the time of its original release, **McCoy Tyner, Joe Henderson and Ron Carter** hadn't recorded together in nearly a quarter century. Their last time in the studio resulted in the 1967 Blue Note album, **The Real McCoy** (BLP

4264/BST 84264)! Their performance on **New York Reunion** with the impeccable time keeping of **Al Foster** at the drums will have you thinking they've not missed a beat. The CD-album, also released in 1991, sharing the same catalog number (JD51) adds four additional tracks to the LP. **A Quick Sketch** by Ron Carter, **What Is This Thing Called Love?** by Cole Porter; **My Romance** by Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart; **Beautiful Love** by B.B. King; Egbert Van Alstyne; Haven Gillespie and Victor Young! If you already own the CD, it will make you wish Chesky Records had released the album as a two-record set! That small issue aside, I enthusiastically recommend you audition **New York Reunion** by **The McCoy Tyner Quartet** for a spot in your library at your earliest convenience. In my opinion, it's one of the best albums in McCoy Tyner's discography and you just might be pleasantly surprised!

Recorda-Me (Remember Me), Ask Me Now - Source: Wikipedia.com

Home, Miss Bea (dedicated to Mother) – Source: Album liner notes by Bert Primack.



Jimmy Smith – The Sermon
Blue Note Records

As **Johnny Hodges, Charlie Parker** and **Sonny Stitt** were to the alto sax; **Clifford Brown, Miles Davis** and **Dizzy Gillespie** to the trumpet; John Coltrane, **Coleman Hawkins** and **Sonny Rollins** to the tenor sax; **Duke Ellington, Thelonious Monk** and **Bud Powell** were to the piano; **Jimmy Smith** was to the Hammond B-3 organ. From his 1956 Blue Note debut, **A New Sound, A New Star** (BLP 1512-BST 81512/BLP 1514-BST 81514) until 1962 when he left the label moving to Verve Records, any release by the organist was praised as a major event in Jazz. Smith's contributions to the



development of modern jazz on the organ are as many fans and critics alike called him, "incredible". An accomplished pianist originally, he didn't begin playing the organ until he was twenty-eight years old but established and personified a jazz language for the instrument by mastering his approach of playing chords with his left hand, harmonic and rhythmic lines with his right hand, while walking bass lines with his left foot.

I began my love affair with Jazz at the age of eight and my education into this extraordinary music on Jimmy's 1959 LP, **The Sermon** (BLP 4011/BST 84011). My copy used in this report is the 1992 Toshiba-EMI Limited Japanese Stereo pressing (BST 84011-BN 4011). Jimmy begins the side long title tune (that's dedicated to label mate, Horace Silver) by swinging at a bluesy groove with a cool lyricism to introduce the main theme tastefully anchored by guitarist **Kenny Burrell** and **Art Blakey** on drums. Smith sustains the momentum on the opening solo at a low flame, then builds each phrase gradually while enveloping each beat to near-perfect melodic invention by its conclusion. Burrell, who follows Smith, impresses with the same intensity on the next reading, affirming the unmistakable stamp of his personality while displaying his harmonic and melodic charm. Tenor saxophonist **Tina Brooks** takes full advantage of the laid-back tempo by swinging lightly with an extraordinary continuity of thought on each verse of the third performance. Lee Morgan preaches the next statement of this marathon jazz service, emphasizing the caliber of his playing with an exquisite interpretation that develops impressively as each chorus commences. Alto saxophonist Lou Donaldson taps the same impeccable vein on the final solo with an agile, sinuous blues workout leading to the sextet's collective summation.

Smith also hits a lively beat that doesn't let up on his uptempo composition that opens the second side, **JOS**, titled for his full name, James Oscar Smith. Jimmy's trio of guitarist **Eddie McFadden** and drummer **Donald Bailey** sets the tone with a high-spirited introduction, evolving into the opening statement by **George Coleman** on alto sax who cooks with passionate phrases that are rocking all the way. Morgan elevates the next reading with the burning intensity of an inferno which fuels the rhythm section into a high-octane culmination. McFadden is given plenty of space and does not disappoint on the next solo that's mature, hard-hitting and sophisticated rhythmically. Smith cooks so hard with a sweltering, soulful performance so infectiously swinging, he's almost unstoppable. The LP concludes with the lovely ballad, *Flamingo* by Edmund

Anderson and Theodor Grouya which was a favorite of bandleader Duke Ellington. Lee sets down a subtle melody that is absolutely gorgeous as he leads the quartet through the theme. He reveals his more lyrical side on the opening statement with a delicate treatment, succeeded by Kenny who provides a brief, elegantly articulated reading in from of Jimmy and Art who are taut and well-disciplined with their accompaniment into the theme's reprise and finale. These are three excellent reasons why the jazz world referred to him as "The Incredible Jimmy Smith" and Miles Davis who after hearing him, paid him the highest compliment by saying, "this cat is the eighth wonder of the world". **The Sermon** is a must for anyone who loves jazz organ, and an essential acquisition for your jazz library that's perfect to experience on Sunday, or any other day of the week!

Flamingo – Source: Wikipedia.com



Ben Webster and "Sweets" Edison – Wanted To Do One Together
Columbia Records

Benjamin Francis Webster (1909-1973) and **Harry "Sweets" Edison** (1915-1999) were two of the most respected and beloved musicians that Jazz ever produced. **Ben Webster** created a style on the tenor sax that's still one of the most personal and immediately identifiable on record. He was affectionately known as "The Brute" for his sometimes coarse, harsh or rough sound by his Ellington bandmates. Webster was capable of expressing intense feeling on any ballad or standard which always garnered amazement from a listener on an album or standing ovations whenever he performed live. Ben was also an essential part of Duke Ellington's orchestra in 1935 and worked with the orchestra continuously from 1939 to 1943,



then rejoined the band for a few months in 1948 prior to embarking on a successful solo career. He credited alto saxophonist, Johnny Hodges for teaching him how to play the saxophone.

Harry Edison was sought after everywhere as a trumpet accompanist and soloist for nearly a quarter of a century. "Sweets" performed with **Count Basie** for thirteen years from 1937-1950, toured with the **Jazz at The Philharmonic All-Stars** and led his own orchestra for a brief time during the fifties. He also played with other orchestras including bands led by **Dizzy Gillespie, Gil Fuller, Quincy Jones, Buddy Rich** and **Shorty Rogers**. He would eventually settle on the West Coast and become a successful studio arranger, composer and musician. Tenor saxophonist **Lester Young** gave him the nickname "Sweets" because of the many beautiful women who could always be found in his company whenever he performed. It was his artistic proficiency and willingness to develop as jazz itself progressed from Swing and Bebop to Cool and Modal however, that made him one of the best to ever play a trumpet and ultimately resulted in his becoming a skilled craftsman on it. Edison possessed a bright, bursting sound that could also be soft-spoken and serene.

The recorded documentation of both **Ben Webster** and **Harry "Sweets" Edison** is well-known and the bands, musicians, and vocalists on which they've been featured or starred as the principal artists could easily complete several jazz libraries on their own merit. In 1962, the two friends wanted to get together and record an album, the joyous result of their collaboration is the subject of this report. An exceptional program of original compositions and timeless standards titled, **Wanted To Do One Together** (Columbia CL 1891), the copy I own which is used in this report is the original 1962 Mono LP. The quintet is fortified by the brilliant rhythm section of **Hank Jones** on piano; bassist **George Duvivier** and **Clarence Johnston** on drums. The first side opens with Better Go which sets a spirited mood on the melody by the quintet with Edison and Webster in front. "Sweets" is off and running from the outset on muted trumpet with the lyrically hot style of a swing-era musician. Duvivier is up next and delivers a delightful cooking session of his own, then Webster provides the most vivid account with richly melodic lines that are very aggressive. Jones has the final solo performance and though brief, his presentation is impeccable.

A favorite of mine from **The Great American Songbook** is next and Webster makes it his own as if George and Ira

Gershwin wrote it especially for him. **How Long Has This Been Going On?** made its debut in the 1927 musical **Funny Face** and begins softly with a duo introduction by Jones and Webster, ahead of Duvivier and Johnston who make their presence known during the melody. As the sole horn and soloist on this enduring standard, Ben's reading is a richly textured disciplined performance of musical intimacy and warmth which has substance. George and Clarence's supplement is elegantly phrased and romantic into the song's dainty finale. Edison's Kitty strolls comfortably into view to end the first side resembling the blues with a mischievous melody statement by the ensemble. "Sweets" switches to a mute for the lead solo and sets the mood with carefree enthusiasm for an interesting interpretation which sets off the solos beautifully. Webster provides a playful character on the next presentation at a leisurely medium tempo with a lovely, easy swing in his tone which sparkles with a steady sureness. Jones follows behind both horns in strong form for a laid-back statement which leads the group back to the final chorus as Edison's kitty strolls out of the room to end the first side.

The 1935 standard **My Romance** by Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart starts the second side with an emotionally sensitive introduction by Hank, followed by Ben, George and Clarence who join in on a fragile expression of the melody. Ben continues as the only soloist on a romantic reading which is polite and respectful. Fans who own the 2013 Wax Time Stereo LP reissue, **Ben & Sweets** (771858) will hear Edison also communicate his heart, mind and soul on a breathtakingly beautiful muted statement that was certainly worthy enough to have been featured on the original album. Ben's tenor sax is incomparably beautiful, deeply moving and even if you're intimately acquainted with this timeless standard, you'll feel as if you're hearing it for the very first time! The quintet shines on the next original by Webster, **Did You Call Her Today?** The trio introduces the medium cooker, then are joined by both horns who provide a mild manner on the theme statement. "Sweets" kicks off the solos with a bright, brassy tone in an excellent illustration of melodic improvisation. Ben expresses his personality on the next reading with a splendid performance which captures his sound at its peak. Hank creates his own exhilaration while drawing superb groundwork from George and Clarence on the closing statement. George and Ira Gershwin make a second contribution to the album with one of their most gorgeous compositions and the album's climax, **Embraceable You**. "Sweets" is the only horn heard here and his contribution to the 1930 standard is majestically stunning. His reading is



exceptionally gentle, giving Edison a chance to show off his sentimental side as a ballad soloist matched by the tender supplement of the rhythm section. **Wanted To Do One Together** is an attractive coupling of two of Jazz's elder statesmen in a program of originals and standards by **Ben Webster** and **Harry "Sweets" Edison** that's well worth considering for your LP library. The sound is very full and vivid on what I consider an indispensable album that shouldn't be missed!

How Long Has This Been Going On? – Source: Wikipedia.com

My Romance, Embraceable You – Source: JazzStandards.com