

Frank Wess with Kenny Burrell – Steamin'
Prestige Records

Submitted for your consideration from my library this time is a 1963 reissue which was originally released in 1957 under the title **After Hours** (Prestige 7118), one of the fine jam session albums Prestige released during the fifties. Each one featured an all-star group of excellent musicians and my copy of this particular LP is the second Mono pressing which places tenor saxophonist and flutist, **Frank Wess** with guitarist **Kenny Burrell** as the headliners and is titled, **Steamin'** (Prestige PRLP 7278/PRST 7278). Joining them on this album are **Thad Jones** on trumpet; pianist **Mal Waldron** who composed all four songs on the LP; **Paul Chambers** on bass and **Art Taylor** on drums. The title selection opens the first side with personality to burn on a swinging introduction by Taylor. Both horns present the opening melody in unison, aggressively trailing each other, featuring Thad on the muted trumpet. Wess starts the solos with a strong performance on tenor which delivers an aggressive impact. Burrell adds a vigorous statement of his own with skillful authority on the second reading. Jones' spaciouly muted trumpet is equally successful in challenging the rhythm section to keep up with him as he carves through each phrase with energetic emotion on the third interpretation. Frank takes another zesty solo; this time on the flute and is exceptional as he plays a few faster choruses. Wess then, spars with Jones for a few spirited riffs, followed by Walton who zips along on the next performance enthusiastically. Taylor punctuates the final statement with fine form and a stinging bite in a concise presentation, prior to the ensemble's return to the theme which ends quickly.

Waldron's **Blue Jelly** begins at a laid-back pace on the introduction by the rhythm section led by Burrell and gradually ascends to midtempo as the entire sextet

presents the melody. Jones is the first soloist, his ideas flowing freely to a slowly unfolding beat secured by the rhythm section's reinforcement. Jones, Burrell and Wess (on flute) exchange short riffs between themselves, before the guitarist's beautiful deep tone settles in at a comfortable tempo on the second reading. The three instrument conversation repeats, then Wess serves up a stylish dish of passionate verses with a side of musical imagination on the third presentation. After the next exchange, Walton adds to the medium swinging mood of his composition with a very satisfying solo. Chambers gets to chat last in this lengthy discussion and does so with a wonderful example of choice notes and artistic creativeness. The second side opener is Waldron's **Count One** and the sextet gets right to work on this midtempo cooker with a light-hearted introduction led by Walton. The pianist establishes an efficient, enjoyable groove from the first note, offering the listener a dual delight of a dancing beat to increase the listening pleasure. Thad and Frank make that perfectly clear with a unified wailing of the melody which features Jones on the open horn; giving everyone a chance to solo except Taylor who keeps things in check with a driving backbeat. Wess blows fresh and free on the opening statement with a depth of feeling and a brilliance of tone which ascends to a climax of jovial excitement. Jones soars on the second solo with riveting presence and a vivacious spontaneity that also sizzles. The high caliber of Burrell's playing on the third solo engages the ear jubilantly and delightfully attests his ability to converse musically in any setting. Walton continues the swinging drive of this bopping beat on the fourth reading with emotional meaning as Chambers and Taylor play strongly behind him. The bassist accentuates the final solo with a flawless reading of two short choruses which are delivered with remarkable poise and conviction, while illustrating the superlative technique that made him a formidable piece in the rhythm section of **The Miles Davis Quintet**.

The album's final selection takes us down an **Empty Street** on this slow-paced blues by Mal Waldron. The song opens with a wistful introduction by the sextet with Jones leading the opening melody march on the muted trumpet. The lead solo by Burrell is superbly interpreted with the guitarist possessing a soothing timbre and sensitivity that he also employs when playing a popular ballad or jazz standard. The second statement by Wess' flute is also thoughtful and the way he caresses each phrase is not only attractively executed but is one of the most beautiful moments on the album. The third performance by Jones is quietly



meditative and presented with a cool modality and introspective timbre. Waldron delivers a dreamlike, poignant presentation at a therapeutic tempo which evolves into a deeply moving solo. The final reading of the album is made by Chambers, whose exceptional versatility is especially notable; resulting in a tenderly, mellow rendition and elegant summation which affirms the beauty of his sound as he plays. Although, **Steamin'** is credited to **Frank Wess** and **Kenny Burrell**; this album and the original title *After Hours* which was leaderless, should have been released under **Mal Waldron's** name because his spirit pervades these tranquil and swinging Hard-Bop sessions, which comprises each of the four songs. Also, the expressive quality of his playing is exhibited with incredible passion and feeling; complemented by the rhythmic energy and lyrical exuberance of his gifted band mates. That issue aside, the musicianship and tremendous talent are intact throughout; well worth hearing and discovering for yourself whether you're new to Mal Waldron's music or are a seasoned veteran of the other albums from the group which would ultimately become **The Prestige All-Stars**.



The Barry Harris Trio – Preliminary
Milestone – Riverside Original Recording Series

I was still in a trio frame of mind so, offered for your consideration from the library is an album by pianist **Barry Harris**. This much underpublicized, extremely talented musician first impressed me on the 1964 Blue Note classic, **The Sidewinder** (BLP 4157/BST 84157) by **Lee Morgan**. The subject of this discussion is titled **Preliminary** (Milestone–Riverside Original Recording Series SMJ-6047), the LP was originally released in 1961 (Riverside RLP 354/RLP 9354). My copy used for this report is the 1974 Japanese Stereo pressing by **Victor Musical Industries, Inc.** The pianist is in

good company working alongside bassist **Joe Benjamin** and drummer **Elvin Jones**. The 1927 song, **My Heart Stood Still** by Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart, originally written for the Broadway musical, **A Connecticut Yankee** which premiered the same year opens the album. A popular tune in the jazz and pop genres, this version opens with a lively uptempo prance through the melody that lets you know from the opening notes these musicians enjoy playing together. Harris opens with a stimulating performance of intriguing ideas that are alive and kicking with unbridled enthusiasm, yet tasteful to the last note. Benjamin steps in next providing his own rhythmic excitement with an energetic statement on the next solo preceding Jones who enters the spotlight last. The drummer exchanges a few thoughts with Harris and Benjamin which preserves the fervor and feeling while emphasizing an excellent grasp of dynamics and tonal sophistication on the song's final statement. The title tune, written by Harris begins with a march like introduction by piano first, then Benjamin's bass before blossoming into a vivacious reading of the main theme. Barry gets things underway with a hard-driving opening statement which enthusiastically affirms his ingenuity as he navigates through each verse. Elvin gets his say in with some explosive brush work on a compellingly swinging presentation that perfectly illustrates why he was a master time keeper on drums and such a significant part of **The John Coltrane Quartet**.

I Should Care, the timeless jazz and pop standard by Alex Stordahl, Paul Weston, and Sammy Cahn was written in 1944, appearing in the 1945 MGM musical, **Thrill of a Romance**. This ageless milestone has been recorded by several a-list musicians and vocalists in both genres and is a solo feature for Barry Harris. The pianist's elegant interpretation is a combination of graceful stylishness and evident affection that's presented in a gentle, exquisite manner. The first side finale is the 1946 song, **There's No One But You** by Austen Croom-Johnson and Redd Evans. This composition is a little-known standard that was rumored to be written for the classic Columbia film-noir drama, **Gilda** starring **Rita Hayworth**, released the same year, but did not appear in the film. The trio takes a brisk midtempo approach to the tune with a stunning introduction of the melody. Harris leads off the solos with enthusiasm on a very impressive opening statement which paces well against the rhythm section. Benjamin presents the next reading with versatile energy that reflects the impressive skill and artistic sensitivity of all three men thinking swiftly and executing spontaneously on the spot,



while Jones' drums give the soloists a propulsive lift that really holds your attention as the song unfolds.

The second Harris original, **One Down** which opens the second side is an easy flowing blues that gets underway with a steady sureness by the trio during the introduction and main theme. Barry opens the readings here, turning in a charming performance in which his proficiency as a composer and resourcefulness as a soloist is displayed. He's followed by Benjamin who keeps the lyricism intact on the song's final statement with substantial agility. **The Talk of The Town** is a modestly recorded pop standard written in 1933 by Jerry Livingston, Allen J. Neiburg and Marty Symes. The words of the song describe a breakup of a couple before their wedding and the gossip which ensues throughout the town in the aftermath. The trio provides the narration of this poignant ballad behind a brief solo introduction by Harris. As the song's only soloist, Barry examines the subtlest nuances of meaning and phrasing in each lyric, resulting in one of the most intimate interpretations that will linger within your memory long after the song's gracefully stylish finale.

The final original by Harris, **Play, Carol, Play** is named after his young daughter and moves the trio back to an uptempo beat. The tune opens with a happy, effervescent introduction and lively main theme; followed by Barry who swings hard on the opening statement with an intense fire. Jones blends beautifully with Harris and Benjamin as he weaves the closing statement in and out of an exuberant exchange of riffs which leads back into the joyful final theme. A timeless classic from the songbook of composer and songwriter Cole Porter (1891-1964) is the album finale. *What Is This Thing Called Love?* was written in 1929 for the Broadway musical, *Wake Up and Dream* and is also featured in the 1946 Warner Brothers biographical film about Porter's life, *Night and Day*. It remains one of Porter's most recorded compositions and like *Night and Day*, has become an unforgettable jazz standard. The trio's rendition opens with a brief vigorous introduction by Jones, which rips right along as the trio states the opening melody with a terrific swing. Harris displays strong chops on the lead solo by taking off with a performance of spontaneous frenzy; followed by Benjamin who also says plenty with an aggressive delivery on a short reading. Then, Jones has the last word with a concise statement of compelling power which only steps aside for the leader's return to take the song out during the closing theme.

Every so often the jazz public is treated to a musician who is in some way, very special. Pianist **Barry Harris** is just such a musician as he illustrates throughout **Premiado**. The musicianship between Harris, Benjamin and Jones speaks for itself, and is made even more enticing by the strong solos each man contributes. The album was originally recorded by **Ray Fowler** with the mastering done by **Jack Matthews**. The remastering by Victor Musical Industries is demonstration class and the sound is that of a real piano, bass and drums in ideal focus for maximum enjoyment in your sweet spot. If you only know **Barry Harris** from **The Sidewinder** or are just discovering his music for the first time, I invite you to audition **Premiado** to consider for your jazz library. The playing is dynamic, the music stirring and the program, a rare treasure which is enjoyable in every sense!

My Heart Stood Still, I Should Care, There's No One But You, The Talk of The Town, What Is This Thing Called Love? – Source: Wikipedia.com



Clifford Jordan – Cliff Craft
Blue Note – Toshiba-EMI Limited

Offered for your consideration from my jazz library this time is an album by tenor saxophonist, Clifford Jordan. **Cliff Craft** (BLP 1582) is the third and final album, the Chicagoan would record for Blue Note following his debut with tenor man **John Gilmore** on **Blowin' In From Chicago** (BLP 1547) and his self-titled album, **Cliff Jordan** (BLP 1565), all three were released in 1957. My copy is the 1991 Toshiba-EMI Limited Japanese Mono pressing (BLP 1582–BN 1582)! There is also a true Stereo pressing available, thanks to a master tape **Rudy Van Gelder** made that was discovered in Blue Note's vaults in 1999 and released by Classic Records as an audiophile reissue (BST 81582), the same year. Joining



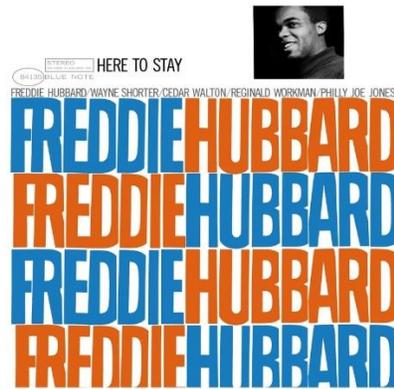
Clifford Jordan on this LP is one of my favorite trumpet players, **Art Farmer**, pianist **Sonny Clark**, bassist **George Tucker** and the lone survivor of the quintet who's still performing and mentoring young Jazz musicians, drummer **Louis Hayes**.

The first side leads off with **Laconia**, the saxophonist's middle name and starts at a medium tempo with a Latin flavor on the opening melody that's cheerfully appealing. The opening statement by Farmer on muted trumpet is keenly incisive and passionately expressive with an articulation and presence reminiscent of **Miles Davis'** sound on **Round About Midnight** (Columbia CL 949), also released in 1957. Clark performs next with a youthful energy that's as smooth as velvet and stands tall on its own account. Jordan's mellow tone on the final reading lightens steadily, unfolds smoothly from beginning to end and is always right on the beat. **Soul-Lo Blues**, the second original by the saxophonist opens with an impressive bass line by Tucker who's joined briefly by Clark, followed by the entire ensemble enters to play the main theme. Jordan launches the lead statement with an illuminating exploration at a smooth flow of well-structured and precisely executed choruses. Farmer's skillful contribution on the next solo is beautifully composed of consummate self-confidence and pristine accuracy. Clark emerges as a significant soloist on the third leisurely paced reading with a virtuoso message that swings and provides the inspiration for Tucker who delivers the final reading with harmonic and rhythmic ingenuity. The title tune, **Cliff Craft** by Clifford comes at you at a speedy tempo with an attention-grabbing introduction to the melody that rides hard from the start. Jordan's tenor sax takes off with a rocking beat on the opening statement that's emotionally compelling and eminently enjoyable. On the next reading, Art delivers a dazzling presentation illustrating his energetic versatility and improvisational flair. Clark builds steadily on the third performance of joyfully significant piano choruses that follow one another with virtuous self-assurance. Hayes gets to shine last in a brief thought of ferocious energy that drives all the way to the end while engaged in a conversation between Farmer and Jordan, prior to the finale.

Side Two starts with a vivacious midtempo rendition of **Confirmation** by Charlie Parker, Clark opens with a few bars prior to the quintet's delivery of the melody. Jordan launches a firm-toned and steady tenor on the opening statement that not only echoes the joy in his playing but helps support the evidence that his music comes from the heart. Farmer puts some fresh light on this bebop anthem,

delivering the second solo with a soulful coherence of tone and strength in depth on each chorus. Clark instills the next interpretation with energetic exuberance on the third reading supported by the lyrical structure provided by Tucker and Hayes. The drummer sustains the intensity on the final statement with a spirited reading so intelligently constructed; it makes evident his impeccable sense of time while trading choruses with Farmer and Jordan ahead of the theme's return, and a concise punctuation by Tucker at the song's conclusion. Duke Ellington's ageless standard, **Sophisticated Lady** is the only ballad on the album and is handled with attentive finesse by Jordan, Clark, Tucker and Hayes. Clifford's opening statement is one of haunting dreaminess where the musical ideas are elegantly presented, and his interpretation will simply take your breath away. Clark follows, expressing great care and thoughtfulness with a delicately gentle feeling on the next solo. Tucker culminates the solos with a tender touch of beauty and splendor on the final statement, while Hayes' tender timekeeping binds the song together; resulting in one of the most deeply thoughtful renditions of this old favorite on record.

The uptempo Bebop classic, **Anthropology** by Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie moves the quintet back into the fast lane, firing on all cylinders for the climax. Both horns fire the first shot in unison to begin the speedy introduction of the main theme presented by the quintet. Art begins the readings with a razor-sharp performance that sets the pace. Clifford charges into the next solo of this scorcher, handling the rapid tempo with an acute sense of time and passionate sincerity. Clark takes off at a fast gallop on the third reading with rapid swiftness that will leave your ears sizzling. The horns return to exchange a few choruses with Hayes who provides his own fireworks which leads back to the closing theme and brings the song to a brisk conclusion. A lot of thought and care went into the excellent remastering of Rudy Van Gelder's original recording by Toshiba-EMI Limited. The music on **Cliff Craft** is exquisitely recorded and makes an indelible impression with the musicians emanating from the speakers as if they're playing in front of your sweet spot. It's also a wonderful record that every Clifford Jordan fan should have in their library that's capable of smoothing the rough edges from your day and enjoying with a glass of your favorite drink.



Freddie Hubbard – Here To Stay
Music Matters Jazz

Up next for your consideration is an album that was recorded fifty-six years ago in 1962 by a then twenty-four-year-old trumpet player named **Freddie Hubbard**. Freddie, while on a break from **Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers** would take center stage as the leader of a quintet recording date featuring fellow Messengers **Wayne Shorter** on tenor sax; **Cedar Walton** on piano and **Reggie Workman** on bass, plus veteran drummer, **Philly Joe Jones**. The result of that session is the Hard-Bop album, **Here To Stay** (Blue Note BST 84135). This record was originally due to be released in 1963 and appeared on some Blue Note inner sleeves but was never issued until 1976 on a two-record set (The Blue Note Reissue Series BNLA 496-2) which also included Hubbard's 1961 Blue Note album, **Hub Cap** (BLP 4073/BST 84073). The current LP was released in 1985 with the original catalog number and cover design by **Reid Miles**. My copy used for this report is the 2008 Music Matters 45-rpm Stereo reissue (MMBST-84135 – BST 84135). An explosive introduction by Jones sets up a driving beat for the opener **Philly Mignon** capturing the drummer's vivid improvisation ahead of the opening melody. Composed by Hubbard for Jones, the two musicians set the tone at uptempo as Freddie leads off the solos with an impeccable opening statement at a breakneck pace. Shorter plays with riveting urgency in an enticing performance on the next solo, followed by Walton who gives off a sense of effortless ease on beautifully inventive choruses which follow one another with exuberant, self-confidence and not the slightest hint of strain. Jones' versatile drumming on the closing statement starts from a tough hard-bop base in between riffs by Hubbard and Shorter and ends with energy to spare prior to the song's upbeat ending.

The quintet slows down for a rendition of **Father and Son** by trumpeter Cal Massey which provides an excellent example of the extraordinary interplay between Hubbard, Shorter and Walton throughout the album. Freddie opens at a slow tempo with a remarkably disciplined performance which recalls an intimate conversation between parent and child as suggested by the title while the rhythm section provides a solid foundation of engaging music in support. Shorter continues this serene sequence on the solo which follows with a delicately stylish reading which is exquisitely well behaved. The closing statement ahead of the theme's return by Walton is prepared with great care and thoughtfulness, highlighting his skillful touches on the piano and versatility. The 1930 jazz standard, **Body and Soul** by Johnny Green, Edward Heyman, Robert Sour and Frank Eyton is simply one of the definitive pieces of music ever written and the lone track on the second side. The list of musicians and vocalists who've recorded it since its initial premiere could easily be described as the Encyclopedia Britannica of Modern Music. Here, it's given a regal treatment by the ensemble, offering Shorter's tenor sax in a supporting role on the introduction and finale behind Hubbard and the rhythm section. This is a showcase for Freddie who gives a majestically simple rendition of the melody and a tender, melancholy delivery on the opening statement. Cedar follows with an equally striking solo which reveals why he was one of the best slow-tempo pianists in jazz.

Nostrand and Fulton, the fourth track in this set, gets its name from an intersection in Brooklyn, New York and is also a midtempo performance by the quintet that starts the second record. Hubbard would later record an uptempo version of this composition on the 1987 Blue Note album, **The Eternal Triangle** (B1-48017) with trumpeter **Woody Shaw** that would regretfully be their final time recording together. On this rendition, Freddie performs his first solo with a bright, uncomplicated tone and delivery and is stunning, the solo by Shorter which follows is also inspired and provides an excellent opportunity to hear the remarkable timbre and delivery of his tenor sax. Walton more than holds his own, matching them both with a smooth statement of his own, then Hubbard returns for a few vivacious thoughts before the quintet's unified closing moments. The lovely song, **Full Moon and Empty Arms** by Buddy Kaye and Ted Mossman is based on the **Piano Concerto, No. 2** by Russian pianist **Sergei Rachmaninoff** and begins the final side of the album. The quintet's rendition is taken at midtempo, a faster tempo than normally heard but is impressive all the same with the solo



space equally divided between Hubbard, Shorter and Walton in that order. The opening solo by Freddie demonstrates a simple beauty with a softly diffused open-trumpet sound which blossoms into a series of imaginative phrases. Wayne gets the next solo spot and shows why he is a force to be reckoned with an intriguing performance that reaches a high standard by its conclusion. Cedar is at his most inventive on the closing statement soloing fluently over an easy, relaxed beat on a banquet of lively verses that are beautifully played, and well matched to the inspired accompaniment of Workman and Jones. The final track, **Assunta** by Cal Massey is straight-ahead jazz at its best and the perfect vehicle for midtempo improvisation by Wayne who takes off after the ensemble opening with impeccable rhythm which gives his opening statement an irresistible flow of ideas and a clarity in his tone that doesn't detract from his lyricism. Freddie gives an enthusiastically agile trumpet solo that offers a glimpse of his exuberance, both as a soloist and an emerging small-group leader. Cedar secures a propulsive swing and delivers a sharp, dazzlingly inventive final statement that is also impressive.

During the early 60's, Hubbard's previous four albums, **Goin' Up** (BLP 4056/BST 84056) and **Hub Cap** (BLP 4073/BST 84073) from 1961, also, **Hub Tones** (BLP 4115/BST 84115) and **Ready For Freddie** (BLP 4085/BST 84085) from 1962 were still selling well. It's the only reason I can think of why Alfred Lion didn't release this album in 1963, because he may not have wanted to saturate the market with five albums in two years. **Here To Stay** is certainly up to Blue Note standards and the recording itself is excellent. The remastering by Music Matters Jazz from the original tapes by Rudy Van Gelder takes this LP to a whole new level and against my 1985 Pathé Marconi-EMI Stereo reissue which I used for a comparison, the MM 45-rpm pressing eclipsed it like the Road Runner disappearing from Wile E. Coyote. Like all the MM reissues, the gatefold photos are breathtaking and the covers themselves are worthy enough to hang on the wall as album art. Anyone who enjoys **Freddie Hubbard's** LP's from his years at Blue Note should consider this record a must to add to their library. **Here To Stay** is an album of stunning music making, the recording an astonishing achievement that I'm happy to have on my shelves and one I highly recommend for yours!

Body and Soul – Source: JazzStandards.com

Full Moon and Empty Arms, Piano Concerto, No. 2 – Source: Wikipedia.com