

Jimmy Smith – Houseparty
Blue Note

Psychologists call it *déjà vu*, the distinct impression of having had the same experience before, that's what it was alright, believe me. I was eight years old when I first discovered **Jimmy Smith** after hearing him on **The Sermon** (BLP 4011/BST 84011). His contributions to the development of modern jazz on the Hammond organ as a solo instrument helped to popularize it for others who would follow. Smith would ultimately lead me to discover the music of **Charles Earland, Richard "Groove" Holmes, Jack McDuff, Jimmy McGriff, Don Patterson, John Patton, Freddie Roach, Shirley Scott** and **Dr. Lonnie Smith** who made the organ their primary instrument. **Houseparty** (Blue Note BLP 4002) hit the stores in 1958 and was the second album I would hear by the man who jazz critics, fans and fellow musicians called "incredible".

It was recorded at the same session which produced **The Sermon** and is Smith's fourteenth album for Blue Note since his debut, **A New Sound, A New Star, Volumes 1 & 2** (BLP 1512/BST 81512 – BLP 1514/BST 81514) in 1956. The supporting cast joining the organist are **Lee Morgan** on trumpet; **Curtis Fuller** on trombone; **Lou Donaldson** and **George Coleman** on alto sax; **Tina Brooks** on tenor sax; **Kenny Burrell** and **Eddie McFadden** on guitar; **Art Blakey** and **Donald Bailey** on drums. I became a huge fan of his playing and purchased as many of his albums as my meager allowance would allow. My copy used for this report is the 1959 US Mono reissue (Blue Note Records, Inc. - 47 West 63rd NYC on the Side 1 label and the Deep Groove only on Side 2 with the label showing Blue Note Records, Inc. – New York USA), the 2nd US pressing.

The album opens with a vigorous uptempo workout of the 1951 jazz standard, **Au Privave** by alto saxophonist Charlie

Parker who recorded it for Mercury Records on a 78-rpm single (11087), released the same year. It would reappear on Charlie Parker's 1958 posthumous Verve Records LP, **Swedish Schnapps** (MG V-8010). Jimmy opens with a brief introduction, afterward, Lee provides a solo chorus of the melody first, followed by the ensemble who add their own excitement to the uptempo theme. Smith is first in the solo spotlight on the attack with a wailing performance, possessing amazing fluency on each chorus. Morgan adds some bite to the second statement with an intense groove that maintains the cooking intensity from beginning to end. Donaldson steps in next for a torrid performance which gives off intensive heat. Tina Brooks comes in next, riding hard on the next robust reading, providing scorching verses of infinite effervescence delivered with an aggressive impact. At its conclusion, I wished he could have been featured elsewhere on the LP. Burrell takes over, adding a vigorous reading of his own with skillful authority preceding Jimmy's returns for a short solo spot ahead of the ensemble's strong finale.

Of all the songs in **The Great American Songbook, Lover Man**, in my opinion, is the pinnacle standard of jazz, pop, and soul. It was written by Jimmy Davis, Roger Ramirez, and Jimmy Sherman for **Billie Holiday** who made it a hit on the pop and R&B charts in 1945. This rendition of the timeless classic highlights Lou Donaldson as the featured soloist with Jimmy's trio of guitarist Eddie McFadden and drummer Donald Bailey. A hauntingly beautiful bass line by Smith makes the introduction, prior to the saxophonist's warm, affectionate theme statement. Lou's alto sax moves up to a sprightly tempo for two lively verses of stimulating solo work before returning to a softer mood for his final chorus. Eddie and Jimmy each deliver one chorus of intensely persuasive passion, then Lou returns to lead the quartet into a thoughtfully, modest climax.

Just Friends, the 1931 popular song by John Klenner and Sam M. Lewis kicks off Side Two at medium-tempo with McFadden leading Smith and Bailey through the bluesy melody. Eddie takes the lead solo, offering the first two of four choruses that are infectiously propulsive with a flowing beat. Jimmy takes the next turn, toning down his searing attack to presenting four choruses of low-keyed swing with a down-home flavor as scrumptious as a good meal. Lee is up next, delivering the next reading with a bright tone, exemplary poise, and accuracy which is executed beautifully. George Coleman enters the spotlight next,



establishing long flowing, graceful lines from his alto sax for a lightly swinging performance of carefree verses. Curtis Fuller conjures up some mellow phrases on the final interpretation preceding the final two choruses by McFadden with Smith and Bailey providing the foundation into the close.

Blues After All is from the pen of Kenny Burrell and our final stop on **Houseparty**. This slow-tempo blues is of the soul food variety and serves up a solo order of Coleman, Morgan, Fuller, Smith, Burrell. Jimmy brings the song to life with one of the smoothest introductions you'll ever hear. He also provides the bass line with his left foot while playing chords with his left hand, harmonic and rhythmic lines with his right hand. Kenny's sensitive approach to the melody is shown to fine advantage as he provides the initial theme. The three horns join the trio when the theme is repeated during the opening and closing chorus. The lead solo by George is a tasteful delight to tempt you for what's to come, followed by Lee who produces a savory broth of the blues that is slowly simmered to perfection. Curtis comes to the table with a plate of appetizing notes that gives the song a wonderful flavor. Jimmy adds the red beans and rice to our dish on the next performance and Burrell delivers the final ingredient to make the meal complete and end the album on a scrumptious note.

Houseparty was recorded by **Rudy Van Gelder** who used the **Manhattan Towers Hotel Ballroom** in New York City for recording sessions with larger groups of musicians that would not fit in his parent's living room. Both, **Houseparty** and **The Sermon** were recorded there and are among the outstanding releases in Smith's discography. The sound is well done and each of the instruments a delight to hear with a wonderful soundstage. Jimmy exhibits a style of playing that is completely comfortable in the Hard-Bop or Soul-Jazz genres. He recorded a total of six studio albums for Blue Note featuring his trio, plus special guests. The other five LP's are **A Date With Jimmy Smith, Volume 1 & 2** (BLP 1547/BST 81547 – BLP 1548/BST 81548) in 1957, **The Sermon** in 1959, **Open House** (BST 84269) and **Plain Talk** (84296) in 1968. If you're a fan of the jazz organ, I offer for your evaluation, **Houseparty**. It's an amazing album by **Jimmy Smith** that though out of print on LP in the US since the 1985 Stereo Cadre Rouge DMM Audiophile Edition (BST 84002), won't break the bank when seeking a Mono or Stereo copy for your library. It's also an LP you can enjoy alone, in the company of friends or guests at your next

Houseparty! The Blue Note RVG Edition CD-album (7243 5 24542 8) released in 2000 adds an additional song, **Confirmation** by Charlie Parker.

Lover Man – Source: JazzStandards.com

Au Privave, Just Friends, The Manhattan Towers Ballroom – Source: Wikipedia.org



Richard "Groove" Holmes – Soul Message
Prestige

Submitted for your approval this time from the library is an album I first heard on our then soul station in Cleveland, Ohio, **WJMO 1490 AM** in 1965. I'd only heard a jazz tune once before then, **One Mint Julep** by **Ray Charles** from **Genius + Soul = Jazz** (Impulse A-2/AS-2) in 1961. I knew the song **Misty** from my uncle's weekend jazz listening sessions but had never heard it played on the organ before, so I called the station and that's how I discovered the music of **Richard "Groove" Holmes**. **Soul Message** (Prestige PRST 7435) serves up six delicious tunes of Soul-Jazz by the organist, guitarist **Gene Daniels** who played with Holmes on two earlier Pacific Jazz LP's in 1961 and 1962, **Groovin' With Jug** (PJ-32/ST-32) with **Gene Ammons** and **After Hours** (PJ-59/ST-59). Drummer **Jimmie Smith** would only record this album with Richard but would go on to enjoy a successful career playing with pianist **Erroll Garner** from 1967 to 1974 and other musicians including **Toshiko Akiyoshi**, **Benny Carter**, **Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis**, **Gene Harris**, **Terry Gibbs**, and **Joe Pass**.

Groove's Groove, a soulful blues by the leader opens the first side with a contagious beat on the melody that compels you to snap your fingers and tap your toes right away. Richard steps up first for the lead solo, moving leisurely with a smooth bass line which accentuates his full-



bodied tone and fluid phrasing on every note. Gene takes over, building on the soothing rhythmic pulse the organ established with a warm-toned performance as succulent as the aroma of collard greens, cornbread, pork chops and steaks from Mom's or Grandma's kitchen. Richard returns for a brief stint of two deliciously scrumptious verses ahead of the finale. Up next is a jazz standard from the pen of Clifford Brown, **Daahoud** moves the tempo up to a tropical flavor for the melody. This song first appeared on the 1954 ten-inch album, **Clifford Brown-Max Roach** (EmArcy MG26043). Daniels opens with a perfectly constructed melodic statement on the lead solo which emerges effortlessly from his guitar. Holmes delves down into the tune's roots, unfolding a wonderfully lyrical performance which states his point with excellent enunciation.

Misty, the 1954 jazz standard by Erroll Garner and Johnny Burke ends the first side on an upbeat note with a showcase for Richard to soar at length as the song's only soloist after a quick jaunt through the opening chorus. His interpretation swings with scintillating skillfulness matched by the steady supplement of Gene and Jimmie propelling the song forward into a charming climax. **Song For My Father** (BLP 4185/BST 84185) by Horace Silver served as the title song of the hugely successful album for the pianist in 1964. The trio eases into the melody nice and easy, giving Daniels a chance to settle into a comfortable tempo to put together an excellent lead solo cooking soulfully. Holmes closes with a lightly swinging interpretation which moves at a medium swinging pace reaching a fitting summation of his respect to the pianist's composition. This rendition of the Garner-Burke standard became the biggest hit for Richard of the decade and his signature song whenever he performed live.

The Things We Did Last Summer is a beautiful song which was written by Jule Styne and Sammy Cahn in 1946, and the trio is remarkably respectful on their rendition of this gorgeous evergreen with a passionately peaceful melody. The opening and closing statements by Richard are ones of compassion and sensitivity. Gene completes the caring mood in between both of Groove's performances with a lovely interpretation of romantic reflection preceding the delightfully delicate conclusion. The title track, **Soul Message** ends this six-song set with a cheerful sermon by Holmes who constructs a concise mellow solo from the catchy melody that unfolds with airy and light verses which wraps the album up neat and orderly.

Soul Message was recorded by **Rudy Van Gelder** and it's a good recording, but not perfect. As I listened to each selection, on Groove's Groove when Richard starts his second solo prior to the coda, and during the organ choruses on **Misty**, the microphone picks up a bit of distortion in the upper register which lasts for about one chorus on the first song and during the second, third and fourth verses on **Misty** before returning to normal. This is particularly noticeable if you're wearing a good pair of headphones as I do because of my late-night jazz LP listening some nights. Aside from those two issues, the instruments have a good soundstage on the remainder of the songs. In addition to Prestige, Richard also recorded for **Pacific Jazz**, **Groove Merchant**, and **Muse Records**, also performing on stage and at festivals around the country and world. He passed away from a heart attack on June 29, 1991, at the age of sixty after battling prostate cancer. If you're a fan of jazz organ or are just discovering the music of **Richard "Groove" Holmes**, on your next hunt for vinyl treasures, I invite you to audition **Soul Message** for a spot in your jazz library. It's a fitting introduction to one of jazz's fascinating, intriguing, and very talented musicians and after you've heard it, I'm pretty sure you'll get the message!

Misty – Source: JazzStandards.com

Richard "Groove" Holmes, Jimmie Smith, The Things We Did Last Summer – Wikipedia.org



Cedar Walton-George Coleman-Sam Jones-Billy Higgins – Eastern Rebellion
Timeless Muse

The quartet who's the subject of this report had been playing for a year prior to recording their first collaborative effort together. Pianist **Cedar Walton** had become



important to the group's success not only as a performer and soloist but as a composer also. **Eastern Rebellion** (Timeless Records SJP 101), released in 1976 presents the bandleader as a producer for the first time. This is also the record which launched the Netherlands label, Timeless Records. His colleagues are the underrated, but brilliant titan on tenor sax, **George Coleman** who played with **The Miles Davis Quintet** a decade earlier and though unjustly underrated, was always in excellent form whether he was playing feathery ballads, lavishly romantic standards, or torrid uptempo compositions. Bassist **Sam Jones** needs no introduction to anyone, especially if they're fans of the quintets and sextets led by **Cannonball Adderley** as he was a prominent part of both groups. He also had a lucrative solo career after leaving Adderley in 1965. Last, but not least is drummer **Billy Higgins** whose resume is a substantial one, having appeared on seven-hundred recordings over several genres of music during his extensive career. My copy used for this report is the 1979 1st US Stereo pressing (Timeless Muse TI 306) after Muse became the American distributor for Timeless Records.

The album opens with **Bolivia**, the first of two originals by Walton which gets underway with a briskly paced introduction by the trio, preceding the spirited uptempo theme workout led by Coleman. The tenor saxophonist is also persuasive on the opening statement, gradually building in intensity with ideas which are effectively carried out with ferocity. Cedar makes his own sharp point on the next reading with an equally passionate interpretation. The closing performance belongs to Jones who walks the bass line with a convincing articulation of notes. The stunning showpiece, **Naima** by John Coltrane is the first side finale and is named for the saxophonist's first wife. The song opens with a cascading solo introduction by Walton which lulls you into thinking what follows will be presented at a slow ballad tempo. The gears then shift upward to an energetic medium tempo theme statement by the foursome led by Coleman who delivers a light, effervescent presentation on the opening chorus anchored by the trio who assure a solid foundation. Walton takes the spotlight next for the closing interpretation, delivering a briskly swinging solo with an assertive impact.

The lone original by George Coleman, **5/4 Thing** opens the second side with a medium fast tempo on the melody by the quartet which is made up of equal parts of swing and soul. Coleman puts his warm tenor brand on the lead solo

with an outpouring spirit. Walton is up next, providing meticulous deft strokes on the keys in a mesmerizing performance. Higgins closes the statements with a presentation sweetened by youthful enthusiasm which builds to a strong climax. **Bittersweet** by Sam Jones is certainly not, and everyone gets an opportunity to solo on this cheery, uptempo creation. Jones plays with unrestrained vitality on the first statement, Coleman keeps the tension up with a commentary which bounces off the drive of the rhythm section effectively. The third presentation by Walton is pure pleasure and skillfully executed with piercing certainty. Higgins gives an exciting, driving performance in the closer which sums up things nicely, leading back to the closing chorus and an abrupt stop.

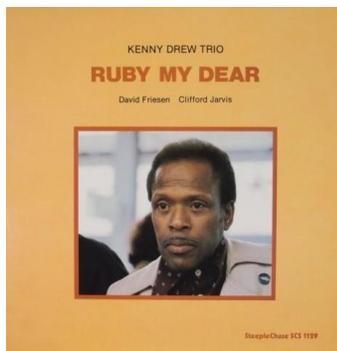
The album's final track is the second Walton original, **Mode For Joe** which was written for tenor saxophonist **Joe Henderson** and made its debut on the 1966 Blue Note album (BLP 4227/BST 84227) bearing the same name which Cedar Walton played on as well. *Joe would later joke with Cedar that **Mode For Joe** made him famous, and Walton rich. The solo order is Walton, Higgins, Coleman, and Jones. Cedar's lead reading weaves an unforgettable spell of imaginative phrases that reaffirms why he was one of the most refreshing pianists in jazz. Higgins puts the next stamp on this contemporary classic with an aggressive groove which cooks. The next solo by Coleman is an attractive interpretation of virile lyricism, and Jones' bass provides the final propulsive reading which wraps up the album with a satisfying ending.

Eastern Rebellion was recorded by **Elvin Campbell** who was also behind the dials on the next two albums, **Eastern Rebellion 2** and **Eastern Rebellion 3**. The current LP is a gorgeous recording with a "you are there" soundstage and the sincerity comes through in each selection, leaving the listener with a feeling of enjoying the music as much as the pleasure the quartet got from playing it together. I found **Eastern Rebellion**, an engaging set of musical joy which I recommend for a nice spot in any jazz library and is an album worth seeking out! **Cedar Walton** would record two more times with **Sam Jones** and **Billy Higgins** on the albums, **Eastern Rebellion 2** (Timeless SJP 106) in 1977 and **Eastern Rebellion 3** (Timeless SJP 143) in 1980. Tenor saxophonist **Bob Berg** would take over the sax duties on both albums and Eastern Rebellion 3 also adds trombonist Curtis Fuller. Two CD albums titled **Mosaic** (Music Masters Jazz 01612-



65073-2) and **A Simple Pleasure** (Music Masters Jazz 01612-65081-2) under the group name Eastern Rebellion hit the stores in 1992 and 1993. Though not currently available on vinyl, **Eastern Rebellion** was released as a Japanese CD album (CDSOL-6301) from **Solid Records** in 2015 under **The Timeless Jazz Master Collection!**

*Source: Album liner notes by Bret Primack



Kenny Drew Trio – Ruby My Dear
SteepleChase Records

The Kenny Drew Trio steps into the spotlight for this choice from the library, **Ruby My Dear** (SteepleChase Records SCS 1129), released in 1980. This was the pianist's fourth studio LP using a trio format on his new label, the first two are **Dark Beauty** (SCS-1016) in 1974, **If You Could See Me Now** (SCS-1034) in 1975, both albums utilizing the talents of **Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen** on bass and **Albert Heath** on drums, and **Morning** (SCS-1048) in 1976. Morning is distinctive from the first two albums because the three instruments consist of Drew on piano, **Philip Catherine** on guitar and **NHØP** again on bass. Here, the venerable pianist is joined by **David Friesen** on bass and **Clifford Jarvis** on drums, a duo who also have large discographies as both leader and sideman. My copy used for this report is the original 1980 US Stereo album. **Bassment**, an uptempo original by Kenny launches the first side with an exciting introduction and soulful melody by the trio. The pianist's lead solo takes off for a sizzling ride exhibiting great energy on every note. Niels-Henning also makes a dazzling statement on the closing reading with Clifford providing excellent support behind them.

During his lifetime, pianist **Thelonious Monk** created some of the most evocative standards in jazz and **Ruby My Dear**

is one of his most hauntingly beautiful compositions. It was written in 1945, recorded for the first time in 1947, making its debut on the 1952 Blue Note ten-inch album, **Genius of Modern Music, Volume 1** (BLP 5002) and is named after Monk's first love, **Rubie Richardson**. The trio's interpretation of the melody is presented with tender lyricism. As the song's only soloist, Drew delivers a heart-warming, sultry performance that is intimately sincere with a lush foundation provided by Pedersen and Jarvis which culminates into an absolutely gorgeous climax. **Gentle Rain** ends the first side with a midtempo Bossa Nova flavor as was originally intended by its creator, **Luis Bonfá** who wrote it in 1965 with lyrics added later by **Matt Dubey**. The song made its first appearance in the 1966 film, **The Gentle Rain** that Bonfá scored in collaboration with orchestra arranger and director, **Eumir Deodato**. It became an instrumental and vocal jazz standard and is one of Luis' best-loved compositions. The trio's rapport on the lead theme is a friendly, harmonious relationship of melodic originality that is skillfully assembled. Again, the song's lone soloist, Kenny swings softly through each chorus for an engrossing reading that will leave the listener spellbound into the closing chorus and gentle fade.

The second side opens with the second composition by Kenny titled **Ending**. This is a very pretty ballad that begins with a short introduction by the trio jointly, which blossoms into a luscious melody presentation of elegant dexterity. The featured solos are by Drew and Pedersen and in the lead reading, Kenny's tasteful interpretation is absolutely beautiful and the epitome of grace, feeling and warmth. Niels-Henning also gives a passionately tender performance with every note in perfect focus and every phrase distinctly articulated, leading to a tranquil ending. **Sunspots** by Austin Wells closes the album on an upbeat note, beginning with gentle cascades on the piano that weaves sinuously through the introduction into a lively frolic on the theme by the trio collectively. Kenny opens the solos with a rousing presentation possessing a carefree zest and energized ideas that are consistently rewarding. NHØP steps in next to convey his message with authority on the second statement. Clifford enters the spotlight last, executing his riffs with the leader and bassist in an invigorating closing solo ending with the coda.

The album was produced by **SteepleChase Records'** Founder **Nils Winther** and the man behind the dials is Recording Engineer, **Freddy Hansson**. Both men put their



talents to great use on *Ruby My Dear* because the sound quality of all three instruments across the highs, midrange and the low end is astonishing with superb fidelity that places the trio in your listening room emanating from your speakers and filling your ears with excellent sound. If you're a fan of jazz piano or are in the mood for terrific trio jazz, I enthusiastically offer for your consideration, ***Ruby My Dear*** by **The Kenny Drew Trio**. It's a great introduction for those who are discovering Drew's music for the first time, a perfect companion to the three albums listed above and an LP that will also delight the seasoned, serious collectors and fans as well! To my knowledge, there was only one pressing of the album on LP in Denmark and Japan (RJ-7498) that was released in 1980. SteepleChase also released the CD-album (SSCD-31129) in Denmark and an unofficial CD-album was issued in Russia (LDR 3010) under the **Limited-Edition** label in 1989. All four editions are out of print!

Ruby, My Dear – Source: JazzStandards.com, Wikipedia.org