



The Jazz Life
Bradford Hayes (Intensity Music, Inc.)
by George Kanzler
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Back when he was in his 20s, jamming around Newark (NJ) area clubs in the '80s, Bradford Hayes cultivated a rich, keening alto sax sound that got to audiences; for if there was one thing a musician in those clubs had to know, it was how to connect, viscerally, with the crowd. Hayes could go on too long, too repetitively, but he had that sound that got right to your gut. Over two decades later he's still got that sound, a close cousin to such altos as Grover Washington Jr., Hank Crawford and David Sanborn who straddle jazz and R&B. But he's learned to edit his former prolixity and developed a penchant for writing tunes that are as likeable and groovy as his sax sound.

On *The Jazz Life*, Hayes never forgets to make the music accessible, full of connections a listener can relate to, whether the tune is a Wayne Shorter classic, a hardbop blues or a ballad milked for palpable, but never cloying, sentiment. Shorter and Grachan Moncur III are Newarkers whose funkier jazz side Hayes showcases, although his own originals come close to the same funky, soul jazz feel, regardless of whether the rhythm is Latin, samba or backbeat blues. A serendipitous plus of this album is the chance to hear such fine but not that well known tri-state area musicians as trumpeter Duane Eubanks, pianist Michael Cochrane, drummer Greg Searvance, trombonist Cornell McGhee and bassist Calvin Jones.

For more information, visit www.bradfordhayes.com.