

Bradford Hayes,
“THE JAZZ LIFE”, Intensity Music, LLC
Reviewed by: Michael Steinman
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Tunji's Blues/ Carolyn/ Black Nile/ My Sons/ The Coaster/ The Desert/ Bianca's Dance/ The Nearness of You/ Whisper Not/ One Little Indian/ Holistic Invention

“The Jazz Life” showcases a fine ensemble led by saxophonist, Bradford Hayes, strongly in a Hard-Bop groove, paying tribute to his former Olatunji, as well as Wayne Shorter, Benny Golson, and Grachan Moncur, III. The repertoire is varied, as are the tempos making this a CD that offers something different from track to track. The leader’s compositions are well-developed, and ingenious, and the performances have been thought out with effective arranging touches. Hayes has a good deal of technical ability, but he knows how to tell a story; his solos have a true melodic flair. His ballad performance of “The Nearness of You”, emotional but never sentimental shows a sensitive reverence for the composer’s lines-Jazz playing that is much more difficult than running the changes. His colleagues are just as convincing: trombonist McGhee and trumpeter Eubanks, both steeped in the Blue Note traditions, say a great deal in their neat, forceful solos without ever falling back on cliché. And the rhythm section is particularly buoyed by precise, hot playing with especially good comping throughout behind soloist.