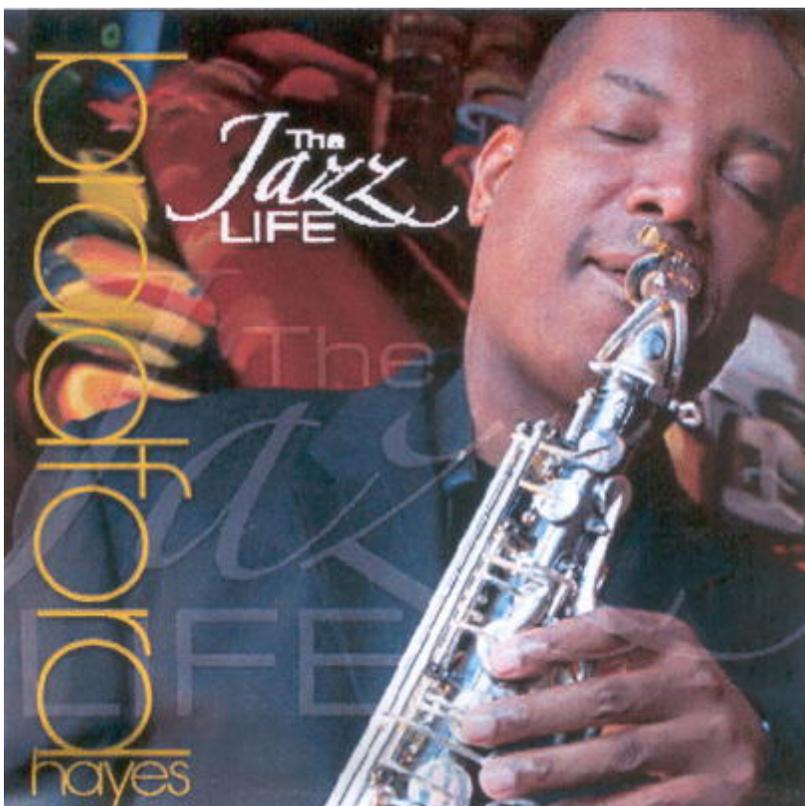


Bradford Hayes

The Jazz Life

Intensity Music



Alto saxophonist Bradford Hayes has always lived the jazz life. The Newark, NJ, resident and public school music educator has been a mainstay in the jazz arena in the northeastern U.S. for many years having performed with a number of jazz luminaries including Jimmy Heath, Al Grey, Cecil Payne, Rufus Reid, and Dr. Lonnie Smith. It comes as no surprise that Hayes' newest album is aptly christened, *The Jazz Life* (Intensity Music). The hard-bop-flavored album epitomizes all the musical elements of a jazz life well lived. It's imaginative yet breathtaking, stimulating yet soothing, intense yet therapeutic.

The Jazz Life, an eleven-track disc, is Hayes' third offering as a leader that combines original compositions and standards. Joining Hayes is the swinging supporting cast of Duane Eubanks, trumpet; Cornel McGhee, trombone; Michael Cochrane, piano; Calvin Jones, bass; and Greg Searvance, drums.

Things jump off to a blazing start with **Tunji's Blues**, a Hayes original, written to memorialize the late African drum master Babatunde Olatunji, for whom the saxophonist worked for for 15 years. A dedicated family man, Hayes also holds his loved ones in high esteem with works in their honor: **Carolyn**, a bouncy piece, written for his wife; the Latin-tinged **My Sons**, penned for his two sons, Bradford Jr., and Morris; and the free-spirited **Bianca's Dance**, for his daughter of the same name.

Hayes' interpretations of works by some of his saxophone idols shows his enduring respect for their contributions to the continuum of jazz. Wayne Shorter's **Black Nile**, done in up-tempo straight-ahead fashion, showcases blistering and well-crafted solos by Eubanks, Cochrane and Hayes. The pace moves to a more relaxed groove on Benny Golson's **Whisper Not** with each of the front line players taking their turns at bat with Cochrane tickling the ivories in formidable fashion.

Searvance is spotlighted on the traps on his brief flag-waving tune, **Little Indian**, while Cochrane's penchant for writing in the smooth jazz idiom is given center stage with **Holistic Invention**. Hayes' sound is a bit edgy to pull this piece off as purely smooth jazz, but his vivacious musical ideas earn him high marks for effort.

The Hayes sextet is tight, moving, creative, versatile, and inspirational. Each individual in the ensemble as well as the group as a whole truly personifies *the jazz life*.

Track selections: **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.**
(Total time: 56:12)

Recorded at Kaleidoscope Sound in Union City, NJ, in 2006.

- Stephen Fratallone/*Jazz Connection Magazine*

Rating: **** -1/2

To obtain a copy of Bradford Hayes' CD, *The Jazz Life*, log on to the saxophonist's official website at www.bradfordhayes.com

<i>Jazz Connection Magazine</i> . May 2007 . www.jazzconnectionmag.com
