



Bradford Hayes

THE JAZZ LIFE - www.bradfordhayes.com . *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.*

PERSONNEL: Bradford Hayes, Saxophone; Duane Eubanks, Trumpet; Cornell McGhee, Trombone; Michael Cochrane, Piano; Calvin Jones, Bass; Greg Searvance, Drums.

By Larry A. Detwiler

"The Jazz Life," the second release of saxophonist Bradford Hayes, is a collection of mostly original works set in the standard small group format – statement of the melody followed by solos and a return of the melody. In listening to this recording, one quickly learns that Hayes is a gifted saxophonist and writer. Yet, I feel he is often overshadowed by two of his sidemen – Duane Eubanks on trumpet and Michael Cochrane on piano. The first selection "Tunji's Blues," an up-tempo, 16-bar blues was written for Hayes' former employer African drum legend Baba Olatunji. Even at this fast pace, the rhythm section is extremely tight and all the musicians supply high energy, blistering solos. "Carolyn," written by Hayes for his wife, a straight-ahead swinger, features solos by Hayes on sax and Cochrane on piano. I found Cochrane's solo to be much better developed rhythmically than Hayes, although both were performed very well. "Black Nile" by Wayne Shorter, is once again an up-tempo straight-ahead swing tune. Eubanks' solo on trumpet demonstrates that he has control of his instrument through the entire range and possesses great finger dexterity. Hayes plays a very nice solo, although his sound tends to get a little thin in the highest register, a point that I notice throughout the CD.

The Latin feel of "My Sons" by Hayes is dedicated to his twin boys Bradford and Morris. Featuring solos by Hayes, Cochrane and Eubanks, the most impressive solo comes last from bassist Calvin Jones, who plays most of his solo in a double time feel with outstanding rhythm and tonal quality.

"The Coaster" by Grachan Moncur is a burner, and the ensemble, especially the rhythm section, does a great job with it. I feel Hayes has his best solo of this CD on this selection as he just flies through multiple choruses and the entire range of the sax at a blistering tempo, yet once again I am impressed by the solo and talents of Eubank on trumpet. McGhee provides a nice solo on this tune but I'm not sure I would put him into the same class of improviser as the other musicians on this album. "The Desert," by Hayes is dedicated to Christmas, representing the three kings with their camels and gifts, traveling through the desert, bringing their gifts to Christ. On this laid back swing tune two solos were impressive. First was Eubanks' that soared in the middle of the solo to the upper range of the trumpet. His control and excellent tone into this register were remarkable. Second was Cochrane, who started with a lot of space in his melodic line and then continued to grow in range and rhythmic complexity, a great example of a truly excellent improvisation. "Bianca's Dance" by Hayes is a samba dedicated to his daughter whom he describes as "Daddy's Girl." I feel that this selection, with its high energy and rhythmic drive, is the best song of the CD. On "The Nearness of You," the jazz standard by Carmichael, Hayes plays the melody with a thick, rich and luscious tone. I would have enjoyed hearing either him, or one of the others (Cochrane or Eubanks) improvise on this great tune. McGhee offers his best solo work of the CD on a laid back swing arrangement of Benny Golson's "Whisper Not." The last two selections of this CD feature works by other members of the band. The first, "One Little Indian," by drummer Greg Searvance, pushes the soloists through the chart at a very quick tempo. Searvance's solo is very thoughtfully crafted. His transition back to the restatement of the rhythmic melody that started the selection was excellent. The second, "Holistic Invention," by pianist Michael Cochrane, is a smooth jazz style tune, on which Hayes plays with a much harder edge sound – and it works well. **Finally, a word to Bradford Hayes. Keep doing what you are doing. You play great and your writing is outstanding.**

Jazz Improv Magazine
March 2007