



Jazz Journal International

(London)

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LANNY MORGAN QUARTET

A SUITE FOR YARDBIRD

Ornithology; Blues For Alice; Segment; Ko Ko; Yardbird Suite; Marmaduke; Steeplechase; The Hymn; Klact-Oveesads-Tene; Donna Lee; Bird Feathers; Kim; Country Gardens (85.21)

Lanny Morgan (as); Lou Levy (p); Tom Warrington (b); Paul Kreibich (d). LA, September 20 and October 1, 1957

[Fresh Sound Records FSR 6023 CD]

Bill Perkins recently told me that he considered Lanny Morgan—along with Joe Maini—to be the greatest lead alto he had ever played with. This CD, featuring some of Charlie Parker's less well known themes, presents another aspect of Morgan's artistry, for he is an outstanding soloist with a beautiful sound and a melodic sense of form. Although Parker is clearly an influence, Morgan has an elegance and poise which brings to mind a giant from an earlier generation—Benny Carter. A relaxed *Ornithology* is a perfect opener and it also features the first of many outstanding contributions from Tom Warrington and Paul Kreibich. On *Blues For Alice* Lou Levy quotes Parker's famous *Billie's Bounce* solo and the leader is particularly inspired on *Segment*, throwing in a reference to *Slaughter On Tenth Avenue* along the way. The fierce tempo of *Ko Ko* is easily mastered as he plots an inventive course through Ray Noble's sophisticated harmonies, and his two bar break on *Yardbird Suite* is an exultant cry of joy. Levy provides a spiritual-like intro to *The Hymn* where Morgan sounds relaxed and unhurried despite a tempo of 90 bars to the minute. This will not surprise anyone familiar with his 1953 solo on *Rhythm And Blues* with Bob Florence which storms along—at what should be—an impossible 108 bars to the minute!

As always with Dick Bank and Fresh Sound, production values are of the highest. There is an informative booklet and Alun Morgan's perceptive notes document the harmonic basis for each title. This is a 'must buy' for bebop fans and lovers of great alto playing.

Gordon Jack