

## LA Beat: Lanny Morgan "6" Sextet at the Lighthouse Café



Written by Glenn A. Mitchell, LA Jazz Scene

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Lanny Morgan©Glenn A. Mitchell

Master alto saxophonist Lanny Morgan brought his phenomenal new "6" sextet of "A" list players to the Lighthouse Café Sunday, November 22nd. I have to say, this concert was one of the all-time best jazz productions at the Lighthouse in recent time with a filled-to-capacity audience as well!

Bob Summers—trumpet, Doug Webb—tenor sax, Tom Ranier—piano, Chuck Berghofer—bass, Steve Schaeffer—drums and Morgan made up this stellar band. All have had very successful musical careers. Morgan's own career has now expanded several decades to include his tenure with big bands of Maynard Ferguson and Howard McGhee, and later with the famed Supersax for more than 34 years and, additionally, with the great Bill Holman band and Frank Capp's Juggernaut band. An amazing career, to say the least!

Morgan's newest CD, *Lanny Morgan Sextet "6"*, with 5 Grammy nominations in 5 categories, was also celebrated with a number of tunes performed this afternoon. The classic "I Remember April" started the afternoon and all band members soloed early on, bringing each instrument into recognizable, genuine jazz brilliance. What we in the audience could see is each of these star players being able to play so well and constantly being backed musically by the band during each of their incredible solos, making a true blending of great jazz improvisation. "Pail Blues" (a Morgan composition from the new CD) gave us an unparalleled tenor sax solo from Webb. Ranier grabbed the harmony, melody and sturdy runs in his very convincing piano solo. Berghofer's bass solo was excellent, while Schaeffer's drumming shined steadily. Morgan wrote a unique number, "Friends Again," taken in some similar fashion from the well-known "Just Friends" - even with some differences, it made for an interesting tune and vehicle for sharing solos. The front line of horns on Morgan's "Pole Cat" was dazzling, with more fine shared solos from Summers, Webb, Ranier and Berghofer.



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“Between the Races,” (also from the new CD) was the first number in the second set. It is a Chuck Mangione composition, arranged by Morgan, and containing a meaty jazz riff and some clever gusto jazz changes. Webb’s solo was dominant along with Summer’s strong trumpet solo and Morgan’s well-defined alto sax solo. The audience constantly gave applause to these musicians throughout the afternoon.

Charlie Parker was a main influence of Morgan’s. On the CD is a number titled “Bird Song” by Thad Jones. Its musical content is superb, bringing out radiant solos from each member of the sextet. A true stand-out number came later in the last set, “Body and Soul,” the all-time American Songbook classic. Morgan performed this eloquent favorite with just the rhythm section. Closing the show was jazz favorite “Lester Leaps In,” with a profound tenor solo from Webb. Ranier accompanied himself for part of the tune by playing bass lines on his very excellent sounding electric keyboard. Berghofer took over and gave another remarkable solo on his fine upright bass. Schaeffer played (and shared) some 16-bar half-chorus breaks with Ranier and Berghofer.

*The afternoon was a great success! Everyone enjoyed jazz music to the max. See Lanny Morgan’s website: [www.lannymorgan.com](http://www.lannymorgan.com). The sextet is highly recommended. Also visit Lighthouse Café’s website. Gloria Cadena continues her much appreciated work booking great jazz music: [www.thelighthousecafe.net](http://www.thelighthousecafe.net).*

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