RLP 12-224

The KENNY DREW Trio

RLP 12-224

Kenny Drew, piano; Paul Chambers, bass; Philly Joe Jones, drums. New York, September 20 and 26, 1956.

SIDE 1

1. Caravan (Mills Music Publications)
2. Come Rain or Come Shine (Morris Music)
3. Ruby My Dear (Thelonious Music)
4. Wonderful (Kenny Drew)

SIDE 2

1. Taking a Chance on Love (Cotsarchis Music)
2. When You Walk Upon a Star (Rodina Publications)
3. Here for Now (Kenny Drew)
4. It's Only a Paper Moon (Harburg-Rose Music)

Just in both a very young and a very old music. From such New Orleans duos to the present is a time-span that has comfortably within the limits of an average man's life expectancy; yet that span has witnessed amazingly drastic changes in attitude and sound — even though (most people still grant) the whole of it can readily be described by the same single term: "jazz."

This is hardly a new or original thought, but it seems a particularly relevant one here. KENNY DREW is among the best of the young generation of jazz pianists (and, incidentally, there is a startling quantity of really good pianists, still in their twenties, on hand these days, which is surely a great sign for the immediate future of jazz). Kenny is thoroughly a modernist, by inclination and by experience. He belongs to that substantial group that came out of high schools, during the mid-1940s, into a post-graduate course that involved hard listening and (very strong) at the several highly active centers of long street, along New York's 52nd Street. But note and important distinction between Kenny and most of his contemporaries:

Many current pianists (I might as well use two names — because so far their sound spring suddenly into the consciousness of their sound spring suddenly into the consciousness after 1940, with no visible antecedents, as if it were almost a matter of pride with them not to dig those who played in the thirties and '40s and '50s. It might be considered almost accidental that things are not that way with Drew. He was born, in New York City, in August of 1928, which is certainly not too long ago. But his mother, a classical pianist, began his musical education early, with private piano lessons at the age of five. (It's an education that hasn't stopped yet. Kenny continues to take classical piano lessons, from William Lateman, and is studying orchestration with A. Jack Thurston.) The home atmosphere was heavily musical; a brother is also a professional pianist; a sister teaches music in the New York public schools. So it wasn't too surprising that before he was twelve, Kenny was in a position to be appreciating Fats Waller and trying to play like him.

From Waller, it was natural enough progression to Art Tatum and Teddy Wilson (and it's not even unusual that Kenny was forced, early in his stay at New York's Music and Art High School, as an act longer enough music. Some of this, however, has kept him from developing a highly original handling of modern jazz idioms. Kenny has certainly doesn't sound like Waller — no more than he sounds like Tatum or Wilson — but he seems to be heavily free influence. When he phrased Tatum, Fats or Wilson in the future of the early. He was not, in other words, originally as much in a forward, adventurous sense as these pianists. But it's there all right. It's present as an underpinning that helps keep Kenny an infinitely swinging and emotionally moving performer, and one who feels strongly that music without a basic beat and without "soul" simply "isn't jazz, but just a reasonable facsimile."

Kenny Drew's career is notable for the quantity of top talents with whom he has been associated. His first job, as accompanist to dancer Pearl Primus, coincided with his first visits to Minton's. He played jam gigs with a young crowd that included Sonny Rollins and Ed Thigpen; he became friendly with Al Haig, who was then working with Charlie Parker and he Kenny sit in for him at times. Kenny's first record date was with Howard McGhee in January, 1946; since then he has worked or recorded with various others: Parker, Miles Davis, Lester Young, Coleman Hawkins and big bad groups on LPs for Blue Note, Prestige and Savoy. From 1951-53 he toured with Buddy de Franco's quartet, along with Conley Russell and Art Blakey, after which he spent three years in San Francisco and Los Angeles, returning East in the late Spring of 1956 as Dinah Washington's accompanist. He then worked with Dizzy's "Jazz Messengers," and has most recently been free-lancing in New York.

When asked some of those manifold questions about personal favorites, Kenny noted that, on pianos, he finds Horace Silver "is cooking the most these days," and among the newer pianists, he "is fan of Randy Weston's fascinating dissonances, he singles out Hodges and Philly Joe Jones, on bass, Percy Heath, Paul Chambers and Doug Watkins.

PHILLY JOE JONES and PAUL CHAMBERS, fortunately enough, were available for this occasion. For, as Kenny myself urgently admits, they have a lot to do with lifting this LP far above the average run of trio sides. (They also helped make those gigs the unpublished Blue Note sessions, which, incidentally, contains I'm most proud of.) For one thing, both men have worked with Drew before, so there is an intimal approach and appreciation of a unique jazz sensitivity already the case when, with the best of intentions, strangers are thrown together. Equally important is Philly Joe and Paul have worked with each other frequently for the past year, as members of the Miles Davis Quintet. Rather than flagging into the usual stockpile of adjectives to describe their abilities, I'll defer to Quincy Miles, whose explanation, when he was being told how good his group actually was (maybe) "I hired the best rhythm section in the country."

The repertoire here is solid material to work with: structurally sturdy standards, by men like Duke Ellington, Harold Arlen and Vernon Duke, that lend themselves to imaginative adventuring (my biggest protested Arlen tune I can the walls crumble in fear or fitter — a tricky, tricky, a blues with guts; Duke Ellington's "Here I'm Fight Upon a Star" — that you might think a touch of corn, but that is turned into a piece of rare delicacy.

A BOOK PUBLICITY Recording Corpn. Corporation, 43-1 Carroll, Produced by Orrin Keepnews and Bill Grauer. Music by Carlos Kamarova. Cover designed by Ken Scott, photograph by Ray De Carava, typography: Ken Scott. Engineer: Jack Higgins (Radio Audio Studios).

The Cover Photograph . . .

is the first of a series, by outstanding American photographers, to be reproduced on Riverside albums. The material is also Distinguished Photographic Group, although not directly related to the contents of the LPs, displays much the same qualities of perceptiveness and sensitivity as characterize the best of current jazz.

This picture is by ROY DE CARAVA. Born in New York City in 1919, De Carava began his serious interest in photography in 1947 completely a pastime, he has had several one-man shows. His first photographic one-man show came in 1955; in 1956 he was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship. He has been represented in two major shows at the Museum of Modern Art: "Always the Young Strangers", and "The Family of Man", the celebrated exhibit created by Edward Steichen, and his work also appeared in the book based on that show. De Carava recently collaborated with Langston Hughes on "The Sweet Flypaper of Life", a photo-and-text book, and is currently working with Hughes on a book concerned with jazz.

and another — Thelonious Monk's Ruby My Dear — that Kenny describes as "a beautiful tune that I play a lot and never tire of playing, a lot of people don't realize that Monk's writing can be very lyrical."

The overall combination adds up most interestingly: a pianist of solid experience, depth and imagination, with an occasional of men who once before and with an unusual degree of these technical skills, playing good tunes with two associates who are not only first-class musicians but are able to join with Kenny to make a real playing unit, not just a casual one-shot combination. It sounds much like listening to music, the results, as you hear it on this album, are every bit as much as you could possibly expect.

Kenny Drew can also be heard on another 12-inch Riverside LP:

Presenting **RENE BEWET**, with Kenny Dorham, Wilbur Ware, Art Taylor (RLP 12-222)

Riverside's "Contemporary Series" of HIGH FIDELITY 12-inch LPs of notable modern jazz includes:

THELONIOUS MONK plays Duke Ellington, with Oscar Pettiford, Kenny Clarke (RLP 12-201)

The Unique **THELONIOUS MONK**, with Oscar Pettiford, Art Blakey (RLP 12-209)

Get Happy, with the **RANDY WESTON** Trio (RLP 12-202)

RANDY WESTON Trio, plus **COLE PAYNE** (RLP 12-211)

Contemporary for No Fakers: **DON ELLIOTT** and **RUTH DUBOIS** plus Dick Hyman arrangements (RLP 12-215)

Jazz for Girls: **MATTHEW GEE** Sextet, with Frank Foster, Kenny Burrell, Cecil Payne, Ernie Henry, etc. (RLP 12-221)

BILL EVANS: *New Jazz Conceptions* (RLP 12-225)

© 1956 RIVERSIDE MUSICAL MERCHANDISE, INC.

Milestone
M
THE KENNY DREW TRIO
MONO
SMJ-6037
SIDE 1
33 1/3 RPM
1. CARAVAN(Mills-Tizol-Ellington)
2. COME RAIN OR COME SHINE(Mercer-Arlen)
3. RUBY MY DEAR(Thelonious Monk)
4. WEIRD-O(Kenny Drew)
KENNY DREW, piano
PAUL CHAMBERS, bass
PHILLY JOE JONES, drums
Recorded September 20 and 26-
1956, N. Y. C.