



ORGM 1096

Wynton Marsalis: Black Codes

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One of the hardest swinging and best-loved of his 1980s recordings wraps listeners in the astonishing group sound that defined Wynton Marsalis. Firey performances by the players jazz writers dubbed 'The Young Lions': saxophonist Branford Marsalis, the 'Doctone' – pianist Kenny Kirkland, the 'Net Man' – bassist Charnett Moffett, drummer Jeff 'Tain' Watts and of course Wynton himself on trumpet.

The 1985 Grammy award winner for Best Jazz Instrumental Performance, Group and Best Jazz Instrumental Performance, Soloist has been remastered from the original analog tapes by Bernie Grundman Studios and is pressed on 180 gram audiophile-grade vinyl at Pallas Group in Germany courtesy of ORG Music.

»Beyond the impressive skill exhibited in the odd structures of the writing, there are improvisations of such conscious order, fire, and rhythmic fluidity that the combination of individuality and continuity gives each piece the feeling of a whole because each musician so decidedly uses what has been played before him as he makes his own statement, the compositions never stop and are always more than strings of so-called solos. Above it all, however, is the swing and the lyricism.

The leader has never played this well on record. There is the clarion melancholy of his superbly controlled work on the title tune, the breezy relaxation of “Delfeayo’s Dilemma”, the puckish snarls of “Phryzzinian Man”, the raw force and structure of “Chambers of Tain”, and the sublime flutters of his ballads. Branford Marsalis, like his brother, has absorbed many ways of swinging, from shifting molten rhythms to the way he sweeps Lester Young’s coolness and detached elegance into contemporary harmony on “Phryzzinian Man”, moving from a superb variation on the brief interlude that introduces him into a creation that is absolutely melodic.

Kenny Kirkland not only accompanies each horn with different colors, attacks, rhythms, and meters, but proves that there is no pianist under 40 in jazz who can swing harder, invent with more linear control, or execute such supple rhythms. Seventeen-year-old Charnett Moffett is shocking in his swing and his sound, never losing his place as Kirkland and Watts reorder the accents and superimpose other time signatures. Ron Carter, as usual, does an impeccable job in reinterpreting and developing the thematic structures and harmonic ideas presented in “Aural Oasis”.

Then there is "Tain" (»What’s Your Name?«, »Puddin’ and Tain, ask me again and I’ll tell you the same.«): probably the dean of the younger drummers, as the ballads show, he is already a master of

cymbal timbre, and the swing he pulls off by periodically accenting his sock cymbal on the second half of two and four or effortlessly adjusting when other meters are introduced, prove him a man of remarkable instincts and attentiveness to detail. Most importantly, his playing is in the tradition of the hot heart of polyrhythm Elvin Jones perfected.

In all, this recording is a testament to the craft, integrity, and passion that idealism instigates. We are all lucky that such young musicians are playing jazz and handling its greatest demands with such an emotive sense of order.« - Stanley Crouch, album liner notes

Wynton Marsalis (tp); Branford Marsalis (ts. ss); Kenny Kirkland (p); Charnett Moffett, Ron Carter (b); Jeff "Tain" Watts (dr)