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The Complete Columbia J.J. Johnson Small Group Sessions (#169) (LP & CD)

Text from mosaicrecords.com announcing this set:

Overlooked for years. J. J. Johnson's small group recordings showcased his playing, his composing, his maturity

It's time for us to fill a gaping hole in our catalog. And for you, even if you own albums by trombone great J. J. Johnson, to include this music in your collection.

You can't claim to be a label devoted to the great names in jazz without offering a set by J. J. Johnson, and his small group sessions for Columbia in the late 1950s are a fascinating chapter in Johnson's career. The man who, back in the 1940s, dumped all the sliding and slurring so common to the instrument and proved you could play with the precision and passion that bebop required.

Small groups, big talent

For the collector, these must-have recordings capture Johnson when his playing ability was at its peak, his compositional and arranging skills fully matured, in the setting - small groups -that had first validated his worth.

After a two-year lay-off from performing, Johnson returned in 1954 in the trombone duo he formed with Kai Winding.

It re-established his career and brought his sound to millions. When their collaboration disbanded, Johnson formed a variety of small units that recorded for Columbia. They included an all-star quartet featuring Tommy Flanagan, Paul Chambers and Max Roach; two quintets, one version including Flanagan, tenor saxophonist Bobby Jaspar and Elvin Jones, a second with Nat Adderley and Tootie Heath; and a sextet with Clifford Jordan, Freddie Hubbard and Cedar Walton. His last session for the label, in 1961, was a quartet with Victor Feldman, Sam Jones and Louis Hayes.

Technique and feeling

It was a time when Johnson's style and tone had deepened, the blazing technical ability that first caught our ears downplayed in favor of more emotion and musical development.

Since the 1940s in New York, when J. J. was a fixture in small groups with Bud Powell, Max Roach, Miles Davis, Fats Navarro, Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie, he loved the intimacy and the way the characteristics of singular musical voices could be featured. While epics such as "Poem for Brass" for Miles Davis and "Perceptions" for Dizzy Gillespie were more substantial affairs, he wrote brilliantly for small groups, and this set proves it. The box also includes many pieces Johnson didn't write, but

as a composer could appreciate - jazz tunes by Miles, Parker, Rollins, Monk and Ellington, and unusual and often overlooked standards by popular composers.

There are 93 selections, including five that appeared only on anthologies, and 16 that are previously unreleased. The booklet includes liner notes by Loren Schoenberg and photographs from the original sessions. Mastered from the original mono (1956-57), stereo (1957) and three-track (1958-61) tapes.

"Given his instrumental command, his imagination, and the superior talent for organization that he displays as a composer, arranger, and band leader, there is little doubt that Johnson was one of the most complete musicians to have emerged in the bebop era." - Bob Blumenthal, Fi Magazine

Discography

(A) J.J. Johnson (tb), Bobby Jaspar (ts, fl -1), Hank Jones (p), Percy Heath (b), Elvin Jones (d).

July 24, 1956

co56830 I Should Care unissued
co56831 Overdrive CL935
co56832 Undecided -1 -
co56833 Joey, Joey, Joey unissued
co56834 Angel Eyes CL935

(B) J.J. Johnson (tb), Bobby Jaspar (ts, fl -1), Hank Jones (p), Wilbur Little (b), Elvin Jones (d).

July 25, 1956

co56835 Tumbling Tumbleweeds CL935
co56836 Cube Steak -
co56837 Never Let Me Go -1 -
co56838 Solar –

(C) J.J. Johnson (tb), Bobby Jaspar (ts, fl -1), Tommy Flanagan (p), Wilbur Little (b), Elvin Jones (d).

July 27, 1956

co56315 Chasin' The Bird CL935
co56316 Naptown U.S.A. -
co56317 It Might As Well Be Spring -1 –

(D) J.J. Johnson (tb), Bobby Jaspar (ts, fl -1), Tommy Flanagan (p), Wilbur Little (b), Elvin Jones (d).

January 29, 1957

co57273 Bird Song CL1084
co57274 It Could Happen To You -1 (omit tb) -

co57275 Our Love Is Here To Stay (omit Jasper) -
co57275 Blue Haze -
co56830 I Should Care (remake) CL973

(E) J.J. Johnson (tb), Bobby Jaspar (ts, fl -1), Tommy Flanagan (p), Wilbur Little (b), Elvin Jones (d).

January 31, 1957

co57277 Barbados CL1084
co57278 In A Little Provincial Town -1 -
co57279 Cette Chose -
co56833 Joey, Joey, Joey (remake) Playboy 1529/30

(F) J.J. Johnson (tb), Tommy Flanagan (p), Paul Chambers (b), Max Roach (d).

April 11, 1957

co57801 I've Got You Under My Skin CL1020
co57802 Harvey's House CL1030
co57803 Nickels And Dimes -
co57804 That Tired Routine Called Love -
co57805 For Heaven's Sake -
co57806 Paul's Pal –

(G) J.J. Johnson (tb), Tommy Flanagan (p), Paul Chambers (b), Max Roach (d).

April 12, 1957

co57807-4 It's Only A Paper Moon CL1030
co57808-1 Out Of My Dreams unissued
co57809-1 Commutation CL1030
co57810-2 God Bless The Child unissued
co57811-5 Be My Love CL1030

(H) J.J. Johnson (tb), Tommy Flanagan (p), Paul Chambers (b), Max Roach (d).

April 26, 1957

co57724-1 Cry Me A River CL1030
co57725-4 Hello Young Lovers CS8109
co57726-5 100 Proof -
co57727-2 What's New –

(I) J.J. Johnson (tb), Tommy Flanagan (p), Paul Chambers (b), Max Roach (d).

May 3, 1957

co57909-5 Kev CS8109

co57910-5 Gone With The Wind -

co57811-1/2 Blue Trombone (Parts 1 and 2) -

note: On CS 8109, Blue Trombone was issued in two parts. The tape ran out during the bass solo causing the break in the tune. But the tune was edited together as a continuous performance soon after the session. That version is used here for the first time.

(J) J.J. Johnson (tb), Bobby Jaspar (ts, fl -1), Tommy Flanagan (p), Wilbur Little (b), Elvin Jones (d).

May 14, 1957

co57944-1 Come Rain Or Come Shine unissued

co57945-6 Tea Pot CL1084

co57946-2 So Sorry Please (no horns) -

co57947-3 Old Devil Moon –

(K) Nat Adderley (cor), J.J. Johnson (tb), Tommy Flanagan (p), Wilbur Little (b), Albert Tootie Heath (d).

February 19, 1958

tk.2 Now's The Time CS8009

tk.2 What Is This Thing Called Love -

tk.1 Misterioso -

tk.3 Tune Up -

tk.1 My Old Flame (omit tp) -

tk.3 Walkin' -

tk,1/2 Laura -

note: CS8009 entitled In Person has dubbed-in applause and fake stage announcements. This is actually a studio recording as presented here.

(L) Nat Adderley (cor), J.J. Johnson (tb), Tommy Flanagan (p), Wilbur Little (b), Albert Tootie Heath (d).

May 26, 1958

co61161-5 Darling Je Vous Aime Beaucoup unissued

co61162-2 Almost Like Being In Love -

co61163-3 Love Letters -

co61164-2 Decision –

(M) Nat Adderley (cor), J.J. Johnson (tb), Tommy Flanagan (p), Wilbur Little (b), Albert Tootie Heath (d).

August 29, 1958

co61444-2 Star Dust unissued
co61445-2 Sidewinder -
co61446-1 Bags' Groove FC38509
co61447-2 Pennies From Heaven unissued
co61448-3 Alone Together –

(N) Nat Adderley (cor), J.J. Johnson (tb), Bobby Jaspar (ts, fl-1), Cedar Walton (p), Spanky DeBrest (b), Albert Tootie Heath (d).

March 18, 1959

co62425-6 Really Livin' CS8178
co62426-3 Alone Together -1 unissued
co62527-5 Speak Low CS8178

(O) Nat Adderley (cor), J.J. Johnson (tb), Bobby Jaspar (ts, fl-1), Cedar Walton (p), Spanky DeBrest (b), Albert Tootie Heath (d).

March 19, 1959

co62433-3 Decision -1 CS8178
co62434 Sidewinder rejected
co62435-5 God Bless The Child -1 CS8178
co62436-5 Red Cross –

(P) Nat Adderley (cor), J.J. Johnson (tb), Bobby Jaspar (ts, fl-1), Cedar Walton (p), Spanky DeBrest (b), Albert Tootie Heath (d).

March 24, 1959

co62437-7 The Nearness Of You -1 unissued
co62438-6 Almost Like Being In Love CS8178
co62439-3 Star Dust(omit Jaspar or Adderley) -
co62434-11 Sidewinder -
co63042-5 I Got It Bad
And That Ain't Good (omit Jaspar) –

(Q) Freddie Hubbard (tp), J.J. Johnson (tb), Clifford Jordan (ts), Cedar Walton (p), Arthur Harper (b), Albert Tootie Heath (d).

August 1, 1960

co65102-L4 Mohawk (long version) CS8406
co65103-3 Shutterbug -
co65104-L2 Aquarius (long version) unissued
co65105-2 Blue 'N Boogie unissued

(R) Freddie Hubbard (tp), J.J. Johnson (tb), Clifford Jordan (ts), Cedar Walton (p), Arthur Harper (b), Albert Tootie Heath (d).

August 3, 1960

co65116-L4 Fatback (long version) CS8770 *
co65116-S2 Fatback (short version) CS8406 *
co65117-3 In Walked Horace CS8406
co65118-3 Minor Mist -
co65119-1 Turnpike unissued
co65104-S6 Aquarius (short version) CS8406
co65102-S2 Mohawk (short version) unissued

* The piano intro was edited out of the issued Fatback(short version) on CS8406. Almost four minutes was edited out of Fatback (long version) on CS8770. Both versions are presented here in full.

(S) J.J. Johnson (tb), Victor Feldman (p, celeste -1, organ -2), Sam Jones (b), Louis Hayes (d).

December 15, 1960

co65714-2 Satin Doll CS8537
co65715-3 Flat Rock -
co65716-8 Gigi -1 -
co65717-2 Bloozineff -
co65717-3 Bloozineff (organ version) -2 CS8565

(T) J.J. Johnson (tb), Victor Feldman (p, vibes -3), Sam Jones (b), Louis Hayes (d).

December 21, 1960

co65867-8 How Long Has This Been Going On -3 unissued
co65745-5 Goodbye -3 CS8537
co65746-2 When The Saints Go Marching In -
co65747-4 I Waited For You unissued

(U) J.J. Johnson (tb), Victor Feldman (p), Sam Jones (b), Louis Hayes (d).

January 12, 1961

co65798-2 Jackie-ing CS8537

co65799-3 Sophisticated Lady -

co65345-12 Full Moon And Empty Arms –

ALBUM INDEX

- by J. J. Johnson
 - CL 935 J Is For Jazz
 - CL 973 Jay And Kai
 - CL 1030 First Place
 - CL 1084 Dial JJ5
 - CL 1161/CS 8009 JJ In Person
 - CL 1303/CS 8109 Blues Trombone
 - CL 1383/CS 8178 Really Livin'
 - CL 1606/CS 8406 JJ Inc
 - CL 1737/CS 8537 A Touch Of Satin
- Anthologies
 - CL 1020 Jazz Omnibus
 - CL 1765/CS 8565 Who's Who In The Swinging Sixties
 - CL 1970/CS 8770 The Giants Of Jazz
 - FC 38509 Almost Forgotten

Original sessions produced by George Avakian (D, E, I, K), Bob Morgan (N, O), Irving Townsend (P), Tom Shepard (S), Teo Macero (Q, R, T, U) and Cal Lampley (all others)

Produced for release by Michael Cuscuna

Executive producer: Charlie Lourie

Recording engineer: Fred Plaut (A-C, L, M, Q-U) and Frank Laico (all others)

Recorded in New York City at Columbia Studio A (F, G) and 30th Street (all others)

Sessions A-G are in mono, all others are stereo

Transfer and remix engineer: Debra Parkinson

LP & CD mastering: The Master Cutting Room

Design direction: Richard Mantel

Design production: InkWell, Inc.

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