

# New Issues

DAVE STRYKER

## STRYKER WITH STRINGS GOES TO THE MOVIES

STRIKEZONE RECORDS 8827

IN YOUR EYES/ CINEMA PARADISO/ YOU ONLY LIVE TWICE/ TAXI DRIVER ( MAIN THEME )/ THEME FROM SHAFT/ CAVATINA/ FLIRTIBIRD/ LOW KEY LIGHTLY/ MOONGLOW/ DREAMSVILLE/ EDELWEISS 62:06

STRYKER, G; XAVIER DAVIS,P; JEREMY ALLEN, BASS; MCCLINTY HUNTER, D BRENT WALLARAB, COND; MARK BUSELLI, JEFF CONRAD, TPT; GREG WARD, AS, SOP; JIM PUGH, TIM COFFMAN, JEFF PARKER, ANDREW DANFORTH, RICHARD DOLE, TBN; SARA CASWELL, MICHELLE BLACK, JOSEPH OHKUBO, RACHEL PATRICK, ANNA CZERNIK, BRYSON KARRER, NOELLE TRETICK GOSLING, TRICIA BONNER, MARISA VOTAPEK, SAGE PARK, SARAH COOK, SOPHIE BUSELLI, VLN; KATHY HERSHBERGER, DEREK REEVES, ALEX HOBERTY, VLA ; YOONHAE SWANSON, STEPHEN HAWKEY, CEL 2/24-25, 3/10 2024 BLOOMINGTON, IN.

Among the some 25 albums Dave Stryker has recorded under his name “Stryker With Strings Goes To The Movies” is a project that stands alone in today’s guitar world. Bringing us back to a time when jazz guitar was featured atop classic string and horn arrangements like the memorable days of Wes Montgomery or Kenny Burrell. Stryker has had a long and fruitful career, aside from his extensive original recordings Dave is well known for his work with Stanley Turrentine. I’ll say that it’s easy to see why Stanley Turrentine, one of the most soulful saxophonists of all time would collaborate with someone like Dave Stryker. Both players have that special gift of putting the right notes in the right place.

Opening with “In Your Eyes” from the movie “Say Anything”, Brent Wallarab’s colorful horn arrangements introduce this soulfully confident piece as it unfolds into a unison melody statement between violinist Sara Caswell and Dave Stryker. Stryker breaks loose with his signature, in the groove soloing followed by Caswell’s equally fine sonic dance with all the right stuff. The two soloists then come together for a conversational interlude of magical interplay. “Cinema Paradiso” from the movie of the same title gets a lush horn and string arrangement intro. Here Stryker states the melody with warmth and clarity demonstrating patient phrasing and breath. Solos by Pianist Xavier Davis and Stryker are rich and carefully constructed with lots of heart and soul. As always Stryker knows how to build the perfect solo, creating just the right amount of tension and release. A mellow bossa feel presents “You Only Live Twice” the title track from the James Bond movie. Stryker’s lush tone and phrasing gives the melody a clean and expressive read and his solo glides nicely amongst Wallarab’s tasteful string arrangements. A sweet electric piano solo by Davis adds another layer of expressiveness. Stryker and Wallarab work together as one to deliver a beautiful arrangement of the theme from “Taxi Driver”, successfully conveying the complexity of Robert DeNiro’s dark and disturbing character. Greg Wards haunting alto voice captures the feel of the original Bernard Herrmann score and then some. “Shaft” gets down and funky with some nice horn and string arrangements laying down the canvas for Stryker to tell the story. “Cavatina” from “The Deer Hunter”

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begins with an exquisite nylon string melody statement before Stryker transitions to electric guitar. The group as a whole does a wonderful job of bringing forth the feeling of what the cast of "The Deer Hunter" was experiencing as they were leaving their homes in Pennsylvania to an uncertain future in Viet Nam. Ellington/ Strayhorn's "Flirtibird" is sultry and very Ellington as Stryker again does a masterful job working with the melody and orchestral arrangements followed by fine solos from Mark Buselli on frugal horn and Stryker. "Low Key Lightly" brings more Ellington/ Strayhorn magic, both tunes from the movie "Anatomy of a Murder". Moonglow opens with some captivating string arrangements that blossom into medium swing as Stryker and Jimi Pugh on trombone share this classic melody. Solos by Stryker and Pugh swing hard and sweet followed by a short shout chorus. "Dreamsville" takes a slow and tasteful pace that would put a smile on Henry Mancini's face and Stryker's melody interpretation is nothing short of perfect. Rodger's and Hammerstein's waltz "Edelweiss" finishes the set with some fine solos from Davis, bassist Jeremy Allen and Stryker.

The more I listen to Dave Stryker the more I recognize what an important voice he is in the evolution of jazz guitar. His clarity and ability to space things out just right coupled with his strong soulful voice is untouchable. "Stryker With Strings Goes To The Movies" is a fine example of his abilities.

Frank Kohl

