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OF HOT HOUSE P42**



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New York's Premier Jazz Guide

June 2018

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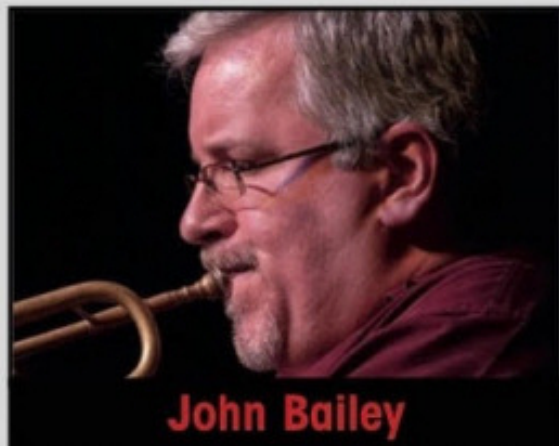
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Where To Go & Who To See Since 1982

WINNING SPINS

By George Kanzler

TRUMPET PLAYERS ARE BASICALLY extroverts, confident and proud with a sound and tone to match. That's true of the two trumpeters whose albums comprise this Winning Spins: John Bailey and Randy Brecker. Both are veterans of the jazz scene, but with very different career arcs. John has toiled as a first-call trumpeter for big bands and recording sessions in multiple genres for over 30 years, but never before releasing an album in his own name. While Randy has had a major career that saw his first disc as a co-leader with his late brother, saxophonist Michael, 50 years ago.

In Real Time, John Bailey (Summit Records), reveals a trumpeter in his prime, reeling off runs and phrases with consummate technique and admirable logic. John leads a piano-less quintet featuring Stacy Dillard, tenor and soprano saxes; John Hart, guitar; Cameron Brown, bass, and Victor Lewis, drums. Seven of the CD's nine tracks are originals by the leader that range from hard bop to blues to a swinging waltz. The two other tunes are by giants of Brazilian music.

On Milton Nascimento's "Morro Velho," John plays flugelhorn with Leo Grinhauz, cello; John's wife, Janet Axelrod, flute; Cameron and Victor. His captivating, exotic arrangement pairs flugelhorn and cello echoing and soloing with each other. Tandem soloing from trumpet, guitar and tenor sax also dominates the other Brazilian tune, Gilberto Gil's bossa "Ensaio Geral," the bright, short conclusion to the album.

The CD kicks off with John's "Rhapsody," a piece that belies its name with a rollicking rhythm and joyful, exuberant solos. John mines his bebop and hard bop knowledge on three originals: "Triplicity," a multi-strand theme with quick-step trades between the horns and guitar; "Blues for Ella," a fast, staccato bop blues line with an especially fluent, crisp trumpet solo; and "Stepping Up," a hard bop piece that culminates in exhilarating four-bar trades.

John's versatility comes to the fore on three other tracks. "My Man Louis!" (for his teenage son, not Satchmo) rides over a jaunty ostinato riff from bass and guitar and a trumpet solo of precisely clipped notes. "Lovely Planet" is a melodically elegiac ballad with Cameron's bass prominent under John's trumpet. And "Children's Waltz" is in a seductively swinging 3/4, John's flugelhorn joined by Stacy's only

outing on soprano sax.

Live 1988, Randy Brecker Quintet (MVDvisual, DVD & CD), features the reissue of a long out-of-print album as a CD, accompanying a previously unreleased DVD of the live date, at Greenwich Village's Sweet Basil, one of New York's most prominent jazz clubs in the 1980s and 1990s. The DVD shows the wood walls that made the club's acoustics appealing for live recordings, while also showing the late 1980s fashion for wide shoulder pads, worn by Randy and tenor saxophonist Bob Berg, the latter also sporting a then trendy turtleneck. Included on the DVD are two bonus tracks not on the audio album, which has seven selections.

Except for Cole Porter's "Love for Sale," all the tunes on both discs are Randy's originals, many of them with elaborate melodic lines. But what distinguishes this recording is the intense energy of the music, a reflection of the volatile times. It is very much a chronicle of the moment, the band fueled by Joey Baron's volcanic, whirling dervish attack on his drum kit, Cameron Brown's hefty, thumping bass, and David Kikoski's two-fisted approach to both piano and synthesizer.

But it is Joey's ebullient polyrhythms, reminiscent of Elvin Jones, that bolster every tune and solo, pushing especially the horns to febrile heights, like Randy's brash, high flying excursion on "Mojoe," a tribute to Joe Henderson. "Ting Chang," a speedy hard bop tune, begins with an explosion of drums and piano that continues under kinetic solos from Bob's growling, hard-edged tenor and Randy's dazzling, mercurial trumpet. Randy's compositional talents shine on "Moontide," a piece that plays off the "spacier" vibe of Herbie Hancock tunes like "Maiden Voyage," trumpet and tenor weaving through a modal-like theme with fluid, contrasting times.

Randy nods to the Miles Davis influence on "Love for Sale," employing a Harmon mute over Joey's brushes. "Hurdy Gurdy" evokes the title instrument in David's synthesizer and in hard beats over a circus inspired melody. It all adds up to an energetic revival of a most worthy item in Randy's discography.

John Bailey's quintet celebrates the release of *In Real Time* at Smalls Jazz Club, June 22-23. The Randy Brecker Quintet is at Jazz Forum, June 1-2.