

Color Changes
Clark Terry (Candid)
by Scott Yanow

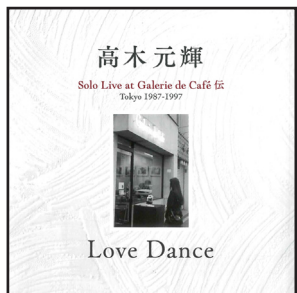
During 1960-61, writer Nat Hentoff ran the Candid label and virtually every release was special, featuring some of his favorite musicians in inventive and well-planned settings differing from the artists' usual recordings. In recent times, Candid has been reborn and, in addition to new releases, the early classics are being remastered and reissued.

In the case of trumpeter Clark Terry (who would have turned 102 this month), *Color Changes* features his always lively and joyful playing in an octet. Terry, who during the era normally recorded with fellow alumni of the Ellington orchestra, had a rare chance to interact with Jimmy Knepper (trombone), Julius Watkins (French horn), Seldon Powell (tenor saxophone and flute) and Yusef Lateef (tenor, flute, English horn and oboe) along with pianist Tommy Flanagan, bassist Joe Benjamin and drummer Ed Shaughnessy. Terry plays pieces by Bob Wilber ("Blue Waltz"), Lateef (the surprisingly brooding ballad "Brother Terry") and Duke Jordan ("No Problem") plus several of his originals.

The arrangements (mostly by Budd Johnson) add color and variety to the music with "No Problem" and the delightful "Flutin' and Fluglin'" being among the highpoints. The latter has both Lateef and Powell trading off on flutes, spots for Knepper and Watkins (a major asset throughout the set) and a tradeoff by Terry with himself on both flugelhorn and trumpet.

While most of the songs are not all that different than on a typical Terry date with the blues and common chord changes being well represented, the company he keeps and the sound of the ensembles (along with the typically high-quality playing) make this a standout.

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Love Dance
(Solo Live At Galerie De Café 桜 Tokyo 1987-1997)
Mototeru Takagi (Nadja 21-King International)
by Pierre Crépon

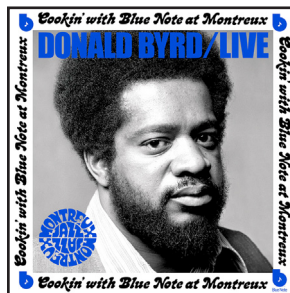
Housed in an old-school five-CD jewel case, *Love Dance* contains five hours of previously unheard Mototeru Takagi (born 81 years and dying 20 years ago this month). Recorded live—and well—at a small Tokyo gallery, the music is strictly solo saxophone, save for one track adding guitarist Taku Sugimoto. Four late '80s sets are complemented by a 1997 tape. The release narrows a close to ten-year gap in Takagi's discography, whose most well-known titles remain contributions to Japanese free jazz' heydays. Although that résumé would suggest hardcore energy playing, this is not at all what *Love Dance* is about.

Here, Takagi focuses on songs. They range from "Going Home" to "The People United Will Never Be Defeated". France, where Takagi resided, makes appearances through an Édith Piaf number and Sidney

Bechet's "Petite fleur", as do Thelonious Monk and Charles Mingus standards. What connects this seemingly disparate material is a matter-of-fact greatness making it transcend genres or even discussion. A case in point is Nina Simone's "Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood", played in medley with the Korean classic folk song "Arirang". The nuances of Simone's vocal interpretation, echoed closely by Takagi, have made the song something special not just in Simone's catalogue but also in music in general and this is what Takagi taps into. Tunes such as Takagi's "Stone Blues" are present in multiple versions and a large part of the material remains unidentified, but it does contain more in the way of compositions, for instance Steve Lacy's "Bone".

The other thread is how Takagi approaches his tenor and soprano, the latter used on a third of the material. In this close-quarter context, in between sparse applause, Takagi seems to devote his complete attention to every aspect of tone production, intonation, articulation, attack and release. He plays notes fully, holding them at an unhurried pace, finding ways to stretch out in the purity of his sound as well as in the material played. No English notes are there to provide context and ascribing intentions would be risky, but if Takagi set out to find the limits of long-form solo melodic playing, he did not encounter them during those sessions. Unsurprisingly, this expansive set is a standout among the recent slew of archival Takagi releases.

For more information, visit kinginternational.co.jp



Live: Cookin' with Blue Note at Montreux
Donald Byrd (Blue Note)
by Jim Motavalli

The story is that these tapes were intended as part of a series of releases recorded at the Montreux festival in 1973. Those by Bobby Hutcherson, Ronnie Foster and Bobbi Humphrey came out, but this set from trumpeter Donald Byrd (who would have turned 90 this month) was shelved for some reason, possibly because his huge hit *Black Byrd* (released in 1973) was still selling strongly. That is too bad, but here is the set now, with sparkling sound via two-inch tape. *Black Byrd* producer Larry Mizell, heard here on synthesizers, let things get a whole lot looser live with a 10-piece band. Four of the musicians were Byrd's students at the University of Pittsburgh: saxophonist Allan Barnes, drummer Keith Kilgo, guitarist Barney Perry and electric pianist Kevin Toney.

The album starts out with the expected "Black Byrd" (written by Mizell). That track goes nowhere but to the charts. A Stevie Wonder cover ("You Got it Bad Girl") is much better, with an extended and burning soprano saxophone solo from sometime-expatriate Nathan Davis, Byrd himself sounds good, too, and things continue to improve.

The cauldron that was electric Miles Davis hangs over these recordings, which is not a bad thing. Byrd's nine-minute "The East" leads off with wah-wah guitar, supported by Ray Armando's congas, electric piano and veteran Henry Franklin on electric bass. The bubbling melody is sinuous and urgent and Byrd's horn is funkily talkative as it gets into a productive dialogue with tenor. Sure, Davis could have sued, but many other artists have usefully mined this territory.

"The East" is otherwise unrecorded, as are the other two Byrd originals, "Kwame" and "Poco-Mania" rounding out the album. The extended "Kwame" is

really great and majestic, like a collision between Davis' *Live Evil* and John Coltrane's *Africa/Brass* and would possibly have been a staple of Byrd's book if audiences weren't then clamoring for something more commercial. His solo is especially to be savored.

"Poco-Mania" is very bright and busy and the head is a bit overwhelmed by having so many musicians on stage. But the solos are intense and committed and the whole thing hot to the touch, guitar, saxophones, Rhodes, synthesizers, percussion, all whipped up into a frenzy. The Montreux audience goes nuts and maybe you will too.

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