

Steve Smith Jazz Legacy

Live On Tour

Steve Smith - drumset
Andy Fusco - alto sax, shaker
Walt Weiskopf - tenor sax, soprano sax, flute, claves
Mark Soskin - piano, Fender Rhodes, maracas
Baron Browne - bass

Produced by Steve Smith
Executive Producers: Paul Siegel and Rob Wallis
Recorded live at Catalina Bar and Grill, Hollywood CA
October 5-8, 2006
by Robert M. Biles

Mixed October 9-12, 2006 by Robert M. Biles at
Bub's Hardware, Silverlake CA
Edited by Manoj Gopinath
Mastered February 2008 by Jim Brick at
Absolute Audio, Atlantic Highlands NJ
Photos by Tim Ellis and Rick Mallin
Design by Joe Bergamini

This recording is dedicated to our dear friend
Steve Marcus.

Special Thanks to:

Janet Williamson, Bob Biles, Tim Ellis, Mike Thomas, Marko Marcinko, Tommy Coster Jr., Colleen Williams, Catalina Popescu, Manny Santiago, Mark Griffith, my friends at Hudson Music: Paul Siegel and Rob Wallis, Zildjian: Cragie and Debbie Zildjian, John DeChristopher, Paul Francis, John King, and Bob Wiczling, Sonor: Karl-Heinz Menzel and Thomas Barth, Vic Firth: Marco Socoli, Vic and Tracy Firth, Remo: Matt Connors, DW pedals: Don Lombardi, Shure: Ryan Smith, Puresound Percussion: Hugh Gilmartin, Michael Bloom and Steve Orkin.

Extra Special thanks to my wife Diane Kiernan-Smith for your open attitude, warm heart and unwavering support for the band and me.

www.vitalinformation.com/steve
<http://www.myspace.com/stevesmithjazzlegacy>
www.marksoskin.com
www.waltweiskopf.com

Baron Browne uses Gallien-Krueger bass amps.

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1. Two Bass Hit (6:50)

(John Birks "Dizzy" Gillespie, John Lewis)
Music Sales Corporation (ASCAP)
and MJQ Music (BMI)
Arranged by Mark Soskin

2. Sister Cheryl (8:57)

(Tony Williams) Tillman Music (BMI)
Arranged by Mark Soskin

3. Insubordination (7:19)

(Walt Weiskopf) Contrary Mary Music (BMI)

4. For Steve (Marcus) (6:07)

(Walt Weiskopf) Contrary Mary Music (BMI)

5. The Peacocks (7:56)

(Jimmy Rowles) Kudu Music Company (ASCAP)
Arranged by Walt Weiskopf

6. Inception (8:28)

(McCoy Tyner) Aisha Music Company (BMI)
Arranged by Walt Weiskopf

7. Ascendant (5:45)

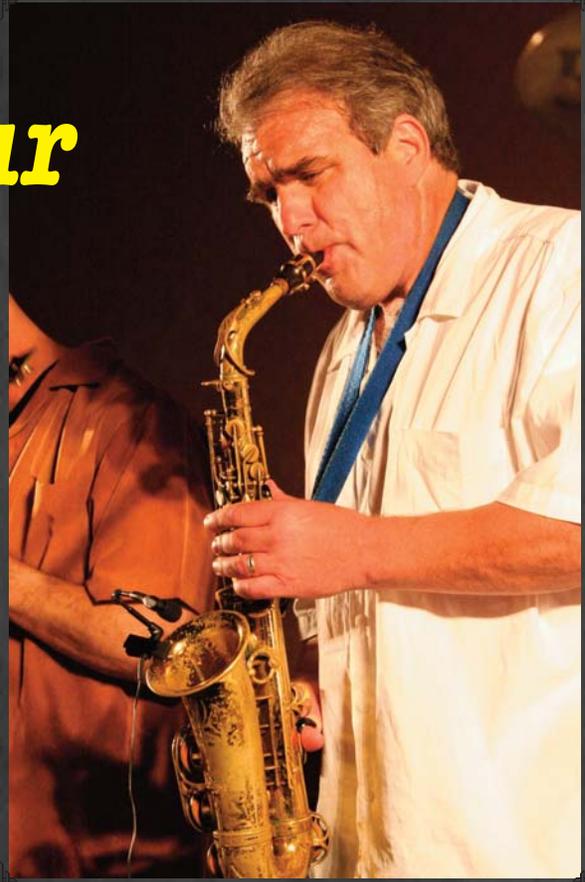
(Jimmy Garrison) EMI Unart Catalog (BMI)
Arranged by Walt Weiskopf

8. A Night in Tunisia (12:36)

(John Birks Gillespie, Frank Paparelli)
Universal Music Corp. (ASCAP)
Arranged by Mark Soskin

9. Moanin' (6:02)

(Bobby Timmons) Second Floor Music (BMI)
Arranged by Mark Soskin





The story of the group Jazz Legacy starts with a quintet called Buddy's Buddies, the Buddy Rich alumni group that was started by the Buddy Rich estate in late 1990s. The group was based primarily around saxophonists Andy Fusco and Steve Marcus, and performed music associated with the legendary Buddy Rich. Steve Marcus had spent twelve years touring and recording with Buddy, and was also part of the early jazz-rock scene with Larry Coryell and Herbie Mann. Andy Fusco was the lead alto player of the Buddy Rich Big Band from 1978-1983, and had also toured with legendary performers such as Mel Lewis and Frank Sinatra. Steve and Andy recruited me to play drums with the group after we played together on several occasions with the Buddy Rich Big Band in the '90s. To complete the group, Mark Soskin, a recording artist and longtime sideman for Sonny Rollins, joined us on piano, and Baron Browne, a versatile musician who has toured and recorded with artists as diverse as Billy Cobham to Tom Jones (and is also a member of my group Vital Information), became our electric bassist. Over the course of eight years, billed as Steve Smith and Buddy's Buddies, we recorded three albums and toured the world. *Steve Smith and Buddy's Buddies*, a studio album, was recorded in 1999, and two live discs, *Very Live at Ronnie Scott's Set One* and *Set Two*, were recorded during our week at the famed London jazz club in 2002.

The sad and unexpected passing of Steve Marcus in September 2005 hit us very hard. At that point we decided to change direction and move away from principally playing music associated with Buddy Rich. We asked saxophonist Walt Weiskopf, a fantastic musician and a long-time friend of both Steve Marcus and Andy Fusco, to join us. In fact, you can see and hear all three saxophonists on the burning DVD *Buddy Rich Live at the 1982 Montreal Jazz Festival* (Hudson Music). Walt is a bandleader and recording artist, and has been working recently with Steely Dan.

We came up with the band name Jazz Legacy, which gave us a wide range of options as far as our musical direction. I wanted to play some music dedicated to the legacy of the great jazz drummers. We had also been playing some original music that was allowing the band to develop its own voice. Pianist Mark Soskin is a prolific writer and arranger, and has been adding exciting original compositions and arrangements to the book. With Walt Weiskopf joining the band, we have another strong composer and arranger who is adding exceptional charts to the band's repertoire, expanding our direction.



There are so many jazz drummers that I have listened to and admired over the years. When I started thinking about new arrangements for *Jazz Legacy* to play, some of the tunes that I chose were ones I had been thinking about for a long time. “Two Bass Hit” is one of these. The main version that I was familiar with is from the 1958 Miles Davis recording *Milestones*, where it served as a feature for Philly Joe Jones. Mark Soskin’s arrangement of the tune is close to the Miles version, though we added some parts that are inspired by a version that Philly Joe played on his 1960 solo album, *Philly Joe’s Beat*.

“Sister Cheryl” is a beautiful composition written by Tony Williams. I first heard it on Wynton Marsalis’ 1981 debut album, and later on *Foreign Intrigue*, the 1985 release by the Tony Williams Quintet. In paying tribute to Tony, I wanted to acknowledge his abilities as both a drummer and composer. “Sister Cheryl” is strong melodically, harmonically and rhythmically.

The electrifying “Insubordination” was written and recorded by Walt Weiskopf for his album *Simplicity*. When I heard this piece, I immediately wanted to add it to the *Jazz Legacy* book because of its extremely fast tempo and “burn” factor.

Shortly after Steve Marcus’ passing, Walt wrote. “For Steve,” which truly captured Steve’s razor-sharp wit and impish personality. Whenever we play this song, we are reminded of our love for our dear friend Steve Marcus.

When I heard “The Peacocks” on *Tea For Two*, a fantastic album co-led by Andy Fusco and Walt Weiskopf, their treatment of this Jimmy Rowles gem moved me. Walt’s arrangement speaks to the very depths of life’s pains, and the band’s performance keeps the solemn mood throughout. This has become one of my favorite pieces.

The original 1962 recording of “Inception” is the title track of pianist McCoy Tyner’s debut as a leader. The drummer on the recording is Elvin Jones. Along with Art Davis on bass, the trio plays this minor blues with a ferocious pulse. It’s truly some of the most exciting jazz I have ever heard on record. Walt arranged the tune for *Jazz Legacy*, and playing it is a high point of each night’s performance.

As another nod to the incredible Elvin Jones, Walt transcribed the Jimmy Garrison tune “Ascendant.” I heard this on the 1968 recording *The Ultimate Elvin Jones*, which featured a trio with Elvin, Jimmy Garrison on bass, and Joe Farrell on sax. This tune is the perfect brush feature, and the melody is so clear and identifiable that I was able to play it on my drum kit before the final head comes in.



The tour-de-force drum feature of the night is “A Night In Tunisia,” which is inspired by Art Blakey. I have a number of versions of this tune by Art, on both DVD and CD. If you haven’t heard Art play this tune, check out the Blue Note recording *The Best Of Art Blakey* for an incendiary version. The original album, *Art Blakey & The Jazz Messengers: A Night In Tunisia*, has a different and very good version also. Mark Soskin wrote an arrangement that incorporates many of features of the different Blakey versions, complete with percussion parts for the band members to play, and a bass solo over the form and percussion “hits.”

The only tune that can follow “A Night In Tunisia” is “Moanin’,” the good-time shuffle by Bobby Timmons. “Moanin’” is another standard of Art Blakey’s and a great way to end the set.

For those of you interested in hearing more of what we played during our week at the Catalina Bar and Grill in Los Angeles, we have a second volume available on my website, www.vitalinformation.com. On that disc is Elvin Jones’ “Three Card Molly,” a swinging tune in 3/4 written by Walt called “Heads in the Clouds,” and another outstanding Tony Williams tune called “Juicy Fruit.” There is also a strong version of the Joe Dukes feature “Soulful Drums,” alternate takes of “Two Bass Hit” and “A Night In Tunisia,” a Freddie Hubbard tune called “Suite Souix” and the Sonny Rollins standard “Airegin.”

Enjoy the music,
Steve Smith



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