



BAND HISTORY

Luther Hughes & The Cannonball-Coltrane Project

I was sitting around one day listening to The Cannonball Adderley Quintet in Chicago, a landmark album recorded in 1959. This album was the only time Cannonball and Coltrane appeared together on record other than their work with Miles Davis. As I was listening to this album I thought it might be fun to re-create and perform the original arrangements.

While I was mulling over this idea, two dear friends came to mind--Glenn Cashman and Bruce Babad--who were big fans of both Cannonball and Trane. For the rhythm section, I called upon two old friends, Tom Ranier and Paul Kreibich. (In `04, when Tom was unavailable for a gig, I asked Ed Czach, the pianist from Paul's quintet, The Jazz Coop, to help us out. I couldn't have made a better call, as you can hear on our CDs. I feel very lucky to have two great players to share the piano duties on our first CD.)

Everyone was as interested in this idea as I was, so we all did our homework on our individual parts, We played our first gig on June 20, 2002 in Southern California and the audience response was overwhelming.

After a couple of gigs doing just the original material, the question was, "Where do we go from here?" After that original `59 LP and their stint with Miles, Cannonball and Trane went on to develop their own identities even more. Cannonball got funky and played some of the first "fusion." Trane went on to write his famous "Giant Steps," then explored other directions, incorporating his spiritual side and avant garde. These different directions opened up so many possibilities for us. We had their entire musical lives to draw upon for inspiration, both in the writing of our own compositions and in the selection and arranging of classic jazz standards identified in some way with Cannonball or Coltrane. Our only limit was our imaginations (which we let run wild) and our two CDs are the result. (I'm already looking forward to our next CD. I can't wait to see where our imaginations take us next!)

Luther Hughes and The Cannonball-Coltrane Project, our first CD, pays tribute to the original 1959 album in a number of ways: the instrumental configuration; the style of playing; utilizing one track each featuring only the alto or tenor sax; and the inclusion of one of the tunes from the original album, "Limehouse Blues." Even Eddie Young's artwork on the cover pays tribute to the style used on the original LP.

As Tom Ranier put it, "Tribute albums are only successful if they are interpretive--that is, not a copy, but rather the players' interpretations, impressions and feelings of the original. The listener should be able to feel the great admiration and love we have for the original reflected in our tribute."

We're honored by and grateful for the support and enthusiasm shown by a number of our friends in the industry. Some have even suggested that Cannonball and Trane would have likely approved. Roy McCurdy, Cannonball Adderley's drummer for 11 years said, "Cannonball liked music that was swingin', had a good feelin' and was bluesy....like your CD."

I invite you to catch the band live sometime. Until then, I think you'll find our CDs to be a pretty good representation of the fun and excitement created at our gigs.

--Luther Hughes