

SELECTED CRITICAL REVIEWS OF BEN REDWINE

-----Ben Redwine made me fall in love with the clarinet again! --Chris Matthews, from Hardball with Chris Matthews

CD Reviews *from the July/August 2006 issue of Jazz Times Magazine*

RED WINE TRIO

Baby Won't You Please Come Home (Mapleshade)

http://jazztimes.com/reviews/cd_reviews/detail.cfm?article_id=17106

With a master's degree in clarinet, Ben Redwine plays the E-flat version in the United States Naval Academy band in Annapolis, Md., and baritone saxophone in the institution's jazz band. He also leads popular traditional jazz groups of his own in the Washington-Baltimore area. Released in late 2004, Baby Won't You Please Come Home is Redwine's first full-length CD and features two fine accompanists in guitarist Tom Mitchell, Jr. and bassist John Previti, both well-regarded local players.

Redwine's theme for the album was music suggestive of "each of the places I've loved" (hence the title song), so it includes such pieces as "Do You Know What It Means to Miss New Orleans," "Louisiana Fairy Tale," "The Georgia Brown Suite" and Hoagy Carmichael's "New Orleans," "Georgia" and "Baltimore Oriole." In a nod toward Redwine's youth in Oklahoma, "Marie" and "Hey, Good Lookin'" round out the program.

Redwine's extensive training manifests itself in his impressive agility and lovely tone. He also plays expressively and negotiates his material confidently. Mitchell's acoustic sound fits the setting perfectly, whether he's strumming chords or picking out dancing, single-note lines. Previti anchors the rhythm with a big sound and contributes flowing, melodic solos of his own.

-David Franklin

-----Ben Redwine is a clarinetist performing in the Washington, D.C., area and a member of the U.S. Naval Academy Band. This outing with a trio also including Tom Mitchell on guitar and John Previti on bass is a breakthrough recording. As Redwine states in the liner notes "My concept ... was to make a 'gumbo' using influences from each of the places I have loved..."

This "musical gumbo" has as its ingredients Redwine's flawless techniques on the horn, perhaps the most beautiful tone to be heard anywhere currently on jazz clarinet especially at the bottom of the instrument's range, impeccable phrasing that lets the music "breathe," a level of interplay among the members of the trio that borders on psychic, and a knowledge of the history of these standard songs that makes them sound traditional and completely fresh at the same time. This is all liberally spiced by an awful lot of knowledge about the New Orleans jazz tradition.

While one may be initially drawn to several well-known standard tunes including a haunting rendition of Georgia (on my Mind) and three variations on Sweet Georgia Brown called the Georgia Brown Suite, there is not a single track on this CD that fails to delight one's ears. Sweet Georgia Brown has been recorded almost countless times by some of the most important jazz artists of all times. Within this context, Redwine's three versions -- each connected but quite different from one another -- can be considered as quite possibly the definitive ones on the clarinet, and among the very best on any instrument. There can perhaps be no greater praise of a jazz album but to say that every song and virtually every phrase within these songs is "haunting" and evokes complex imagery and feelings.

At a time when the clarinet is again re-emerging as a major jazz instrument, Ben Redwine and

his trio have both summarized the past -- by their brilliant understanding of traditional music - - and defined a major path for the future. Redwine's music deserves to be considered as being at the same level as his well-known, and equally brilliant contemporaries Ken Peplowski and Don Byron. If Redwine continues to record at this level over a period of years, he will undoubtedly establish his own school of jazz clarinet playing: his sound and phrasing are absolutely beautiful and sound truly original.

If you love jazz clarinet, you will have to own this CD. If you like jazz clarinet, you will probably love it after listening to this CD a couple of times.

As a technical footnote, the recording quality on this CD far surpasses most current jazz CDs being released and further adds to the enjoyment of the music. --George Huba, jazz afficianado, on Amazon.com review

-----The shorts are scored with newly recorded soundtracks by the Snark Ensemble and the Redwine Jazz Band. Clarinetist Ben Redwine is involved in both, and he's perhaps the best interpreter of nontraditional silent-comedy scoring since the Club Foot Orchestra. While he uses the traditional ragtime tempos, he gets into more rarefied modes that range from klezmer and Brubeck.

--Richard von Busack, on Metroactive.com, the online version of Metroactive newspaper, serving the Silicon Valley of California

<http://www.metroactive.com/metro/01.09.08/dvd-langdon-0802.html>

-----Did I say I liked the music? I've gotta admit Kalat, I was a bit worried on that score, or scores. As hater of all orchestrations Alloy, I was made a bit nervous by the Snark Ensembles somewhat European slant, but as one who also enjoys it when someone takes a chance, goes out on that proverbial limb, and succeeds (hell, this is why I love Langdon), I have to say that the Snark takes a chance, but finds themselves in tune with Langdon's wonderful off-timing, and the Redwine Jazz Band does good work...

Richard Roberts, reviewing the Langdon set

-----Critic's Choice Award: --Dave Kehr, New York Times

<http://www.alldayentertainment.com/cgi-local/SoftCart.100.exe/online-store/scstore/allday/slapstick/langdonreviews.html?L+scstore+gmdx7735ff75e475+1216069665>

-----I just saw the four first shorts included on the set, and mark my words: BOTH THUMBS UP!!!!!! (and I wish I had more thumbs!) The films are absolutely brilliantly restored, and I LOVE that music!

--Norwegian fan on silent film bulletin board

-----favorable review:

TIME MAGAZINE

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Lost and Found: The Harry Langdon Collection

review by Richard Corliss

...clarinetist Ben Redwine, whose sophistication in the Brahms (trio) was as compelling as his sense of humor in switching among six different-sized clarinets for the Stephens work...

--Joan Reinhaler, Washington Post Review, August 22, 2008