LINERS FOR VALSE SINISTRE

Contrary to opinion, jazz has always reflected the times. Sadly, again, we are bearing witness to the racial injustice in the United States, wherein Black people’s lives are constantly at risk, even from those sworn to protect its citizens. As harrowing as this is, there seems to be a dialogue in which Black voices are finally being heard. The Cellar Music Group recognizes that jazz is not only music native to America, but also that the progenitors of this music are the very lives that are being threatened daily. I’m pleased to present the fourth release led by a Black artist produced for the Cellar Music Group

Jeremy Pelt, Producer

As someone who was born in Canada, who grew up here and who still lives here, I’ve been somewhat sheltered from the injustices going on south of the border. As a result, I have unconsciously used this as an excuse not to engage in conversations about racism and discrimination with my Black friends and heroes of this music that I love. I now realize that t be silent is to be complicit. This is no longer an option for me, and I stand in solidarity with our black brothers and sisters.

Cory Weeds, Executive Producer

ARTIST NOTES

Thank you for purchasing and listen to this recording. In these times when music is basically free of charge, it’s nice to know that purchasing a musician’s work is important to you.

The music presented here is a snapshot of my musical vision, where I am today, where I’ve been and where I might be headed. I’ve been leading various aggregations of “Freedom of Ideas” for well over a decade and I am grateful to have the opportunity to document this vision.

The music is from the compositional pen of a variety of sources—people I’ve admired, some of whom I’ve had personal and musical relationships with. I would like to mention some of them in particular.

‘Little Melonae’ was written by Jackie McLean and arranged by Dezron Douglas (The Voice of Reason). Dezron is a disciple of Mr. McLean and, for me, McLean I the epitome of a purity in music that represents freedom in the true sense of the word. I have been a fan of his since my first memories of hearing music that was played by my father when I was a youngster. I played with Jackie on two occasions, which was a dream come true. One of my treasure is an inscription from him on one of his recordings that reads “To Billy, one of my favorite drummers of all time.” That is something I’ll cherish all my days!

The title track ‘Valse Sinistre’ is written by the wonderfully unique composer Carla Bley. I fell in love with this piece while I was working with her. It was written for a project initiated by artist, surrealist painter and novelist Leonora Carrington. She wanted to collaborate with Carla on an opera. Unfortunately, the opera never came to be. The piece, however, remains, and I think it’s a gem. I was incredibly fortunate to play, record and tour with Carla in various musical ensembles over the years.

Tony Williams will be forever acknowledged as one of the greatest drummers who ever lived. He changed the way the instrument—and the music—was played. His playing reached me in every way: technically, emotionally, spiritually and intellectually. He also developed into a wonderful composer. He was a GIANT!

I would like to thank the wonderful young men who played with me on this recording. Micah, Dayna and Dezron are truly inspiring. And thanks to Cory Weeds and the Cellar Music Group, for giving me an opportunity to record this music, to Jeremy Pelt for suggesting the label to me and for producing the recording, to Tessa Souter, my love, who encourages and believes in me through thick and thin, and to my parents and family, who have supported me in all of my musical endeavors from the beginning.

Billy Drummond

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