

Harry Allen, Tenor Saxophone

"Stan Getz was once asked his idea of the perfect tenor saxophone soloist. His answer was, 'My technique, Al Cohn's ideas, and Zoot's time.' The fulfillment of that ideal may well be embodied in... Harry Allen."

- Gene Lees, jazz writer and lyricist (Corcovado, Dreamer, Waltz for Debby)

In 2024, Harry Allen was inducted into the Rhode Island Music Hall of Fame and in 2020 into the Jazz Monsters Hall of Fame at SOKA University of America and was a top-three finalist for France's Academie du Jazz's Prix du Jazz Classique for his CD, "Under a Blanket of Blue," with guitarist Dave Blenkhorn. Not only was this CD recorded remotely during the pandemic, but also mixed and mastered by Harry.

He has recorded over 70 CDs as a leader and many more as a sideman. Three of Harry's CDs have won Gold Disc Awards from Japan's Swing Journal Magazine, and his CD **Tenors Anyone?** won both the Gold Disc Award and the New Star Award. His recordings have made the top ten list for favorite new releases in Swing Journal Magazine's reader's poll and Jazz Journal International's critic's poll for 1997, and **Eu Nao Quero Dancar (I Won't Dance)**, the third Gold Disc Award winner, was voted second for album of the year for 1998 by Swing Journal Magazine's reader's poll. The Harry Allen - Joe Cohn Quartet won the New York Nightlife Award for Outstanding Jazz Combo Performance of 2006 and was nominated for Best Jazz Combo by the Jazz Journalists Association for the same year. Harry also won the 2010 New York Nightlife Award for Best Jazz Solo.

Harry has performed at jazz festivals and clubs worldwide, frequently touring the United States, Europe and Asia. He has performed with Rosemary Clooney, Jay Geils, Ray Brown, Hank Jones, Frank Wess, Flip Phillips, Scott Hamilton, Harry 'Sweets' Edison, Kenny Burrell, Herb Ellis, John Pizzarelli, Bucky Pizzarelli, Gus Johnson, Jeff Hamilton, Terry Gibbs, Warren Vache, and has recorded with Tony Bennett, Johnny Mandel, Ray Brown, Tommy Flanagan, James Taylor, Sheryl Crow, Kenny Barron, Dave McKenna, Dori Caymmi, Larry Goldings, George Mraz, Jake Hanna, and Al Foster, among others.

Harry is featured on many of John Pizzarelli's recordings including the soundtrack and an on-screen cameo in the feature film **The Out of Towners** starring Steve Martin and Goldie Hawn. He has also done a series of commercials for ESPN starring Robert Goulet.

Harry was born in Washington D.C. in 1966, and was raised in Los Angeles, CA and Burrillville, RI. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree in music in 1988 from Rutgers University in New Jersey, and currently resides in North Bergen, New Jersey.

DISCOGRAPHY

BMG/RCA, Victor Releases

Just You, Just Me
If Ever You Were Mine
I Love Mancini
I Can See Forever
Cole Porter Songbook
Dreamer
When I Grow Too Old to Dream
Christmas in Swingtime
Harry Allen Plays Ellington Songs
Once Upon a Summertime
Day Dream
Eu Nao Quero Dancar (I Won't Dance)
Here's To Zoot
Tenors Anyone?
Harry Allen Meets John Pizzarelli Trio
Plays The Hits Of Stage And Screen
Viva Bossa Nova

GAC Records Releases

Milo's Illinois
The Bloody Happy Song
Under a Blanket of Blue
Watering the Roots
Rhode Island Is Famous For You
Scott Hamilton/Harry Allen Live!
I Walk With Music
Conversations
The Harry Allen Quartet
The Harry Allen- Joe Cohn Quartet
Can You Love Once More?

Swing Brothers Releases

Swing Brothers
I'll Remember April
Harry Allen Meets Trio da Paz
007 Songs
Down for the Count
For The King of Swing
Recado Bossa Nova

Soul Of My Life
Blue Bossa
Some Like It Hot

Challenge Records Releases

'Round Midnight
New York State Of Mind
Hits By Brits
Rhythm On The River

Arbors Records Releases

Flying Over Rio
South Pacific
Guys and Dolls
The Sound of Music
Live at Feinsteins
Stompin' The Blues
Hey, Look Me Over
The Candy Men - Harry Allen's All Star Saxophone Band

And Look For Our Other Releases:

Like The Brightest Star
Venus Records
Quietly There
Stunt Records
Jazz for the Heart
McMahon Jazz Medicine
Jazz for the Soul
McMahon Jazz Medicine
When Larry Met Harry
Palmetto Records
Heavy Juice
Concord Records
A Little Touch of Harry
Master Mix Music
Live at Renouf's
Master Mix Music
Jazz im Amerika Haus
Nagel-Heyer Records
Blue Skies
John Marks Records
Live at Birdland, Vol. 1&2

Nagel-Heyer Records
I'll Never Be the Same
Master Mix Music
I Know that You know
Master Mix Music
Someone to Light Up My Life
Master Mix Music
A Celebration of Billy Strayhorn's Music, Vol. 1&2
Progressive Records
A Celebration of Sammy Fain
Audiophile Records
How Long Has This Been Going On?
Progressive Records
Something About Jobim
Stunt Records
London Date
Trio Records
For George, Cole & Duke
Blue Heron Records
Cocktails For Two
Sackville Records
The Back Room Romp
Sackville Records
Love Songs Live
Nagel Heyer Records
Allan And Allen
Nagel Heyer Records
The Music Of The Trumpet Kings
Nagel Heyer Records
Barnestorming
Woodville Records
French Lullaby
Venus Records

“**Outstanding**” - Leonard Feather

“Sheer *Excellence*” - Gene Lees

“Harry Allen’s playing is nothing less than **perfect**”

- John Pizzarelli

“Harry Allen is **fantastic**. He plays both *modern* and yet in the **grand tradition**” - Steve Allen

“Rhythmic edge and endless **flow** of ideas...a first division **tenor** player” - Martin Gayford, The Daily Telegraph

“**Rich** and **Satisfying** when he's balladeering, *mind blowing* when he's cooking” - Martin Richards, Jazz Journal

“...his **tremendous** tenor sax playing...endlessly *inventive* and with a flood of **original** ideas...his tone and execution are always **superb**”

- Eddie Cook, Jazz Journal

Reviews

All About Jazz

Harry Allen: Milo's Illinois

By David A. Orthmann

May 25, 2021

In February of 2019, [Harry Allen](#) played a gig at Shanghai Jazz, a restaurant/jazz club in Madison, New Jersey. Allen's contributions to the opening set transpired amid a splendid convergence of circumstances. His tenor sax, an acoustic piano and an upright bass were not miked or amplified in any way. Obviously noisy diners were conspicuous by their absence. Standing less than five feet from the first row of tables, Allen didn't feel the need to huff and puff and blow the house down. Evincing a tone that was self-contained, free of affectation, and rife with nuance he improvised tales in the context of songs from the Great American Songbook.

For those who haven't had the opportunity to hear him in such an ideal setting, there's Milo's Illinois, a superb date co-led by Allen and bassist [Mike Karn](#). Their dialogues on songs spanning several decades of the twentieth century (as well as a couple of originals) are so complete and deeply satisfying that the presence of a chordal instrument or drums would only serve to muddy the waters.

The disc's eleven tracks aren't exercises in nostalgia or cynical attempts to attract a financially viable segment of an ever-shrinking jazz audience. Allen and Karn don't simply play the songs; they live and breathe inside of them. From "Just One of Those Things," to "Tea for Two," to "A Time for Love," their ingenuity and playfulness make time-honored material sound—and feel—vigorous and essential. Although the tracks generally evolve in a head/solos/head manner, there's nothing facile about Allen's and Karn's use of familiar methods.

For the most part, Allen's thoughtful, straightforward approach to the songs favors gradations in tone instead of flashy detours or ornate embellishment. His penchant for taking a somewhat different course on the in and out heads contribute to the record's extemporaneous character. He executes refined variations of the melodies (a delightfully frisky rendition of "Tenderly" is a noteworthy exception) and makes each phrase sound like a distinct entity that merits scrutiny. Indicative of a clear-sighted player with a lyrical streak, Allen's improvisations are devoid of the shock and awe moments that have become commonplace in contemporary jazz. In his domain, temperance is truly a virtue. Meticulously constructed narratives betray no signs of inessential detail, inflated climaxes, and gratuitous emotion.

During the heads and Allen's solos Karn walks the tightrope by offering vigorous commentary as well as providing harmonic and rhythmic underpinning. Seizing the opportunity to act as something more than a dutiful, one-man rhythm section, he asserts himself as an equal partner while remaining mindful of fundamental responsibilities to the music. In some instances, minimalistic combinations of notes are spot-on yet suggest an adventurous spirit. In other cases, loquacious, irregular sequences speak for themselves while reinforcing Allen. The swagger of Karn's walking lines include brief, ear catching variations in timbre and emphasis which enhance his resolute momentum. Left to his own devices for substantial portions of the record, Karn forges his own space within the music. Not unlike his years as an excellent tenor saxophonist, his solos display a bold approach and always stays true to the core of each song.

From the beginning to the end of Milo's Illinois, Allen's and Karn's resourcefulness is a joy to behold. Highly recommended.

All About Jazz

Harry Allen: Milo's Illinois

By C. Michael Bailey

March 14, 2021

The COVID pandemic has changed many things about daily life, creating something of a new, mutated "normal." This is no more apparent than in many of the "outside-the-box" methods that performance artists have used to subsist and ply their trade during a virtual lockdown. In particular, tenor saxophonist Harry Allen took the pandemic head on by cutting a European tour short in March 2020, returning to New York City. But rather than simply wait to see what happened, Allen jumped headlong into two ambitious projects. Taking advantage of some newly acquired recording equipment and computer software, the saxophonist recorded a "solo" recording, *The Bloody Happy song* (GAC Records, 2020). This recording featured Allen alone, appearing in a variety of computer-generated virtual formats, from solo horn to little-big band. The results were swinging and impressive.

Extrapolating this method, Allen enlisted the guitarist Dave Blenkhorn, with whom he had been touring in Europe on the eve of the pandemic, to make a trans-Atlantic recording: Allen in New York City and Blenkhorn in Bordeaux, France (consider the romance of those locales!). This resulted in *Under A Blanket Of Blue* (GAC Records, 2020). Both projects successfully showed that creativity is adaptable as necessary, and, at its best, brings everything closer together, in spite of temporal circumstances. Allen's

most recent projects highlight the good. They also restore that bit of mystery that is still able to make even the most jaded and cynical among listeners.

Take, for instance, Allen's third pandemic project, *Milo's Illinois*, recorded in Allen's home with double bassist Mike Karn. The title itself is filled with questions. Who is Milo and why in Illinois? Only part of this is revealed but that part is worth it. In numbers, *Milo's Illinois* is made up of nine standards and two originals. The subject matter is from across the map, from the hopeful "Love Is Just Around The Corner" to the resigned "Just One of Those Things," to the sepia-toned "Tea For Two." The songs are captured with an intensely relaxed spirit, one of making the best of a marginal situation with intimacy and empathy.

Allen's tone remains as sweet and confident as ever, adopting a piquant character when applied to Antonio Carlos Jobim ("O Grande Amor," "How Insensitive"). Karn meets Allen head on, anticipating the saxophonist and guiding him. Karn provides the introduction to several pieces, giving "Tea For Two" his most thoughtful consideration before kicking things off in a swinging fashion with Allen's entry. Mitchell Parish's rarely recorded "Gypsy Sweetheart" is provided a rounded treatment with saxophonist and bassist clicking along effortlessly. Irving Berlin's "The Song Is Ended" is submitted, upbeat and strolling in a steadfast 4/4, rolling into "How Insensitive," providing Karn is greatest, and most inventive, solo space.

"Milo's Illinois" is the Karn contribution to the recording, a circuitous bebop piece with an impressive head and compelling interior. Milo turns out to be a dog, a small one. And, "Milo's Illinois" is a song about keeping a small dog warm, bringing this project to its peaceful and positive close with questions still unanswered. Praise the small and simple. They will never disappoint and it's been a long winter.

All About Jazz

Harry Allen: Tenor Saxophone In The Time Of COVID

By C. Michael Bailey

January 16, 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic has given rise to any number of keen improvisations, each manifesting from the necessity of having to "quarantine in place." Tenor saxophonist Harry Allen, the "Frank Sinatra" of his instrument, thinks way outside the box—recording within the friendly confines of his own living room, while under health crisis house arrest. Good for you, Harry Allen. Thank you. Here are his impressive results.

Harry Allen
The Bloody Happy Song
GAC Records
2020

Warding off cabin fever early in the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, tenor saxophonist Harry Allen hunkered in his living room with some new recording equipment and computer software, creating a virtual jazz recital featuring several different formats, from solo saxophone to big band. Allen had previously been planning a solo saxophone recording to be produced at his home before the pandemic kicked in and had already begun assembling the necessary equipment. The pandemic pushed the project to fruition. As such, Allen was in charge of the whole shooting match: performing, arranging, producing, engineering, and mastering the final product, as well as composing two of the selections presented.

Allen presents himself with different sized virtual ensembles (for which he composed each part electronically). His original, "The Bloody Happy Song," is treated with up-tempo, big band swing accompaniment, which the saxophonist capably scores with with an ear equally in the arenas of Benny Goodman and Stan Kenton. Allen's other original, "Sweet Little Things," is provided the same crack arranging and format, but at a lazy ballad tempo, allowing Allen a relaxed soloing environment, one that extends into the small combo treatment of "I Got Lost In His Arms." Allen's larger group performance of "Too Close For Comfort" proves his coy sense of humor regarding the pandemic and his place in it.

Allen performs solo on Michel Legrand's "The Summer Knows" and the Duke Ellington/Billy Strayhorn composition, "The Single Petal Of A Rose." He is at once provocative and predictable in the sense that these are well-worn songs he is breathing a different, even more vital, life into. Allen's keen ear for lyricism is displayed freshly and unadorned, allowing a full appreciation of his considerable talent. Harry Allen is a keeper of the flame of traditional, mainstream jazz, making no apologies for being so.

Under A Blanket Of Blue
GAC Records
2020

Conceived from the same stressors catalyzing The Bloody Happy Song, Under A Blanket Of Blue added an additional level of complexity and challenge to the new COVID conception-production paradigm. In this case, Allen had been touring Europe with France-based, Australian guitarist Dave Blenkhorn in March 2020, when Allen received a telephone call from his wife, summoning him home due to the COVID travel ban to be

instituted two days hence. Allen went home with a conversation he had with the guitarist in mind regarding recording at home ringing in his ears. So, with both musicians secure in their respective homes in New York City and Bordeaux, France, they recorded a collection of nine standards and one original (Allen's "The Bloody Happy Song" from the previous review) over a two-month period, working on one or two songs per week.

The two artists took a queue from classical music period performance specialists, deciding to go old school instrument and recording-wise. Allen recorded performing on a 1938 Selmer Balanced Action tenor saxophone captured through a Royer R10 ribbon microphone, while Blenkhorn used a 1958 Gibson 175 model guitar. A Django Reinhardt enthusiast, Blenkhorn brought a 1920 "Hot Club" vintage sound to the performances while maintaining Joe Pass-inspired walking-bass figures interspersed among his tasteful chording. That guitar environment proved to be money for Allen, who played at the top of his form..

Novel conception and recording method apart, the musical duet is the most intimate performance setting. It requires that two individuals cooperate and coalesce artistically, creating something not heard before. Sure, all of the songs in this recital have been performed and recorded every which way, some many times, before. But these songs as presented by Harry Allen and Dave Blenkhorn re freshly minted That alone makes them special, unique. Casual and close, the two musicians bring music together from across an open.

The repertoire is tried and true, with the closing songs defining the collection: Victor Young's 1932 "Street of Dreams" receives a breezy introduction from Blenkhorn before assimilating a first timid Allen into its confines. The song gathers swing density ending on a well conceived coda. Charles Trenet's "La Mer" (Columbia, 1946) bounces with tuneful glee, with Allen gently coaxing the melody through the harmonic underpinning provided by Blenkhorn's guitar. Jimmy Van Heusen's "Imagination" rubs its baladic backside against Allen's original "The Bloody Happy Song" reprised here from the same-titled recording above. The two end with an introverted performance of Duke Ellington's "Solitude," proving again that the Great American Songbook continue tp provide an endless source of inspiration.

Joe Lang, Jersey Jazz
April, 2021

While the pandemic has been a drag in many ways for jazz musicians, tenor saxophonist HARRY ALLEN has taken the initiative to record three self-produced albums, the latest being Milo's Illinois (GAC Records – 012) a duo outing with bassist MIKE KARN. In addition to one original by each of the principals, the program includes "Love Is Just

Around the Corner,” “Just One of Those Things,” “A Time for Love,” “O Grande Amor,” “Tea for Two,” “Gypsy Sweetheart,” “Tenderly,” “The Song Is Ended” and “How Insensitive.” Allen and Karn have been playing together quite a bit in recent years so the empathy apparent in their playing is not surprising. One thing that is ever present in any Allen performance is his innate sense of swing, one that is shared by Karn. The hour spent with this music will pass so quickly that you will be hitting the repeat button many times.

Harry Allen: Timeless Machine

Wherever lyrical, swinging, classic tenor saxophone is needed, Harry Allen answers the call

By Jeff Tamarkin

April 26, 2019

Simply put, Harry Allen has it all. He’s consistently reliable and endlessly adaptable, swinging and inventive, thoughtful and resourceful, smooth and bold-and, this counts for a lot: easygoing, affable and, especially, tireless. On tenor saxophone, he has graced so many stages and so many recordings over the past two and a half decades, both as a sideman and a leader-he’s made more than 40 albums under his own name for the Japanese market alone-that any attempt to patch together a résumé would be a futile exercise.

Then there’s his versatility. Allen’s most recent releases in the American market include collaborations with keyboardists Larry Goldings, Ehud Asherie and Rossano Sportiello and a live tribute to Billie Holiday and Lester Young, cut at Michael Feinstein’s New York nightclub with vocalist Rebecca Kilgore. Kilgore is also featured, along with vocalist Eddie Erickson, on a trio of albums from the enduringly popular Broadway musicals *Guys and Dolls*, *South Pacific* and, most recently, *The Sound of Music*. A scroll through Allen’s discography reveals tributes to Benny Goodman, Duke Ellington, Zoot Sims, Cole Porter, Henry Mancini and Count Basie, but also to British songwriters, classic American soul music, New York City, the James Bond films and, on a 2011 release, *Rhythm on the River*, those poetic bodies of water.

He’s cut Brazilian sets with Trio da Paz (Romero Lubambo, Nilson Matta and Duduka Da Fonseca) and a group featuring guitarist Dori Caymmi, a rhythm section and four cellos, and has established longstanding working relationships with father-and-son guitarists Bucky and John Pizzarelli and fellow tenor saxophonist Scott Hamilton, whom Allen

considers a mentor. And that's not even touching on his prolific accompanist work, a fine recent example of which is guitarist Gerry Beaudoin's *The Return*.

So the guy is prolific and versatile. But just how good is he? "He's got everything," says Bucky Pizzarelli. "You give him something to play and he'll give you the best solo you've ever heard. He did a record date when [my son] John brought him out to California, with Johnny Mandel, to overdub a tenor sax solo. He did it the first time. Johnny said, 'Does this guy ever make a mistake?' I love playing with him; he's unbelievable."

"Working with him in the studio is a breeze," says Kilgore. "He can make decisions very quickly and they're good decisions. He's fast and he's got great ideas."

That seemingly bottomless well of creativity accounts for a large chunk of Allen's appeal to fellow musicians and keeps him gainfully employed. The other factor is his innate ability to process a stunningly broad palette of song material. "I've yet to find a tune Harry does not know," says Sportiello, the Italian pianist who has served in Allen's quartet for the past four years. The pair recently collaborated on *Conversations*, a series of duets on compositions drawn from the songbook of lyricist Johnny Burke, most of them co-written by Jimmy Van Heusen. "He's got incredible facility playing at any tempo, in any key, and within different jazz styles, always with great taste and an excellent quality of sound and powerful swing. His time and pitch are perfect and he can improvise like a volcano, phrase after phrase, and you'll never hear him playing patterns or repeated licks."

Allen's skills are undeniable, but what drives him? As he explains it, he just likes to play. In fact, Allen admits, he's perfectly content even to perform a song he doesn't care for. For many of his thematic albums, he leaves repertoire decisions up to the label head. His own job, Allen surmises, is simply to make the best of what's handed to him. "When I was very young, doing one of my first tours," Allen says in his Manhattan apartment, the afternoon after a sideman date with Freddy Cole at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola, "I was touring with this old guitar player, Dickie Thompson. He was of that generation that was really into teaching the young kids what's right and what's wrong. He said you have to play every song like it's your favorite song in the world. I argued with him and said, 'No, you play songs that you want to play,' and later on I realized he was absolutely right. It doesn't matter how good a tune it is-you could hate the tune-but you have to play it like it's your favorite tune in the world. That comes in very handy when I'm doing projects where I really don't care what tunes they give me to play. I'll play them like they're my favorite tune and find what is musical or different."

Fortunately, Allen is rarely put into a position where he's confronted by a song with no redeeming qualities. A traditionalist with a penchant for the Great American Songbook and other time-tested material, he's more often than not able to apply his golden chops to

a song worthy of him. During a recent gig at Feinstein's in Manhattan, where he was accompanied for the first set by his regular bandmates bassist Joel Forbes and drummer Chuck Riggs, as well as pianist Bill Cunliffe (subbing for Sportiello), Allen, attired and coiffed meticulously, called songs as they occurred to him ("I despise setlists," he says later): "Skylark," "You'd Be So Nice to Come Home To," Woody Herman's "Apple Honey." Playing with confidence, the band as tight as bands get, Allen—who describes his own sound as "big, round and warm with a lot of air in it"—explored every nook and cranny of every melody. Hints of his key influences—Hamilton, Sims, Stan Getz, Ben Webster, Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young—occasionally bubbled up, but there was no imitation; he owned every note.

For the remainder of the evening, the band was joined by trombonist Wycliffe Gordon and trumpeter Jeremy Pelt, both of whom turned up the heat considerably. Allen grooved right along, his solos taking on a rougher, tougher punch, reminiscent of the late '40s R&B honkers. Yet even in this new guise he managed to retain his smoothness and grace. "It's very easy for jazz guys to fall into certain categories like 'He's a swing-type player' or 'He can sound like Stan,' but he's so much more than that," says Cunliffe. "Harry has a very open sound and phrasing that lets the music go to many different places. I like that he doesn't play a lot of notes when a few notes will work, and I enjoy the way he plays with time. He's an intelligent improviser and he's got a real rollicking boisterousness when it's called for. He's got many nuances to his sound and it's an authentic expression."

Harry Allen is an old schooler, to be sure. Although he occasionally acquiesces to relatively contemporary material—he's recorded Billy Joel and Stevie Wonder tunes and plans, honestly, to record Madonna's "Material Girl"—he's clearly more comfortable around music written before his 1966 birth. And he's a purist of sorts: "The important thing to me when I'm recording any song is to not lose the intention of the song," he says. "With a few exceptions I won't record a song unless I've looked at the sheet music. If you get the actual sheet music then you have what the composer either wrote or hired an arranger to write; it's the actual sanction. I'll change some things around, but I try not to lose the overall picture."

Allen has written some, but when his internal quality control mechanism kicks in it usually prevents him from following through. "The jazz industry as a whole has too low of a standard for what's good with originals," he says. "The great songwriters wrote great songs; there's a whole slew: Duke Ellington, Wayne Shorter. But not everybody writes great songs. I write hundreds of songs and I throw most of them in the trash. Every now and then I'll write one that I think is good and I'll record it."

When he does go into a studio, that same respect for authenticity guides him. The gimmickry that allows virtually anyone today to create a recording by patching and tweaking electronically is not his style. "When you listen to Ellington," he says, "even

when the horns are playing you can hear every note of the rhythm section. Duke is comping very sparsely for the most part and leaves a lot of space. I do most of my records by putting everyone in a good room and letting them play, without headphones. If there's one bad note or a squeak I might use something to fix it, but most of the records I've done lately, we're all in the same room with a very minimum amount of baffles. A lot of studios nowadays are acoustically dead and then they add in the room sound electronically. That is stupid. In an acoustically dead room, you feel like you can't get a good sound. That's not music-music is together."

Allen's musical preferences follow a straight line back to his childhood, when his big-band drummer father played recordings by Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald and the like around the Allen home-which shifted from Maryland to L.A. and eventually to Rhode Island. "It's compelling music and it drew me in right away. It's so well done," he says. "By the time I was hanging out with friends who were listening to pop music, I would listen to it and say, 'That's not good.'"

Allen's first instrument was the accordion; he and his accordion-playing sister gigged with dad on drums. But, explains Allen, "Long before I started playing accordion I knew I wanted to play saxophone." Following an unhappy attempt at clarinet, he finally landed where he was meant to be. He played in a school band at Rutgers University, then landed his first professional gig when Bucky Pizzarelli hired him to replace Zoot Sims at a New Jersey gig. "Dizzy Gillespie walked in," Allen recalls. "I was so scared, I was shaking like a leaf."

Early associations with tenorist Hamilton, bassist Major Holley and drummer Oliver Jackson boosted Allen's profile, and it was John Pizzarelli who introduced Allen to Japanese producer Ikuyoshi Hirakawa. Allen began recording albums exclusively for the Japanese market, cutting some 30 titles for BMG Japan and another 10, give or take, for Hirakawa's own label, averaging two per year for most of the past two decades.

Concurrently, Allen's American discography has expanded steadily since his debut as a leader, *How Long Has This Been Going On?*, was released in 1988 on the Progressive label. Most of his recent releases have alternated between the Arbors and Challenge labels. For the latter, Allen recently completed his fifth recording with Hamilton and also released *Rhythm on the River*, which features Sportiello, Forbes and Riggs, with Warren Vaché blowing cornet on such tracks as Hoagy Carmichael's "Riverboat Shuffle" and Stephen Foster's "Old Folks at Home (Swanee River)." Like all of Allen's Challenge projects, the theme was suggested to him by label head Chris Ellis, who also assembled the track list. "I'm very happy to do that," says Allen. "I love learning new tunes and finding gems. Chris will send me a list of tunes and I'll know some of them and not know a lot of them and I'll go and learn them."

Arbors' The Sound of Music, 14 familiar numbers such as "Climb Ev'ry Mountain," "Do Re Mi" and "My Favorite Things," includes the regular current quartet as well, with Kilgore and Erickson providing vocals. Guitarist Joe Cohn, a longtime member of Allen's group, is also present. "It was made during the period when we were switching from guitar to piano and we did several records with both of them," says Allen.

In concert, Allen usually eschews the thematic approach that dominates his recordings and wings it-as he did on the night when Cunliffe, Gordon and Pelt sat in-but occasionally he likes to rally around a set of related songs. On the first Monday of April, for Allen's regular Feinstein's gig, the entire crew that made The Sound of Music assembled at the upscale nightclub to perform the music live, and this summer Allen and Kilgore plan to reprise a show they put on last year and recently recorded: "Some Like It Hot: The Music of Marilyn Monroe." Another recurring gig for Allen involves a saxophone quartet called the Four Others (with tenors Eric Alexander and Grant Stewart and bari Gary Smulyan), based on a concept originated by Woody Herman.

One place you're unlikely to find Allen is in a downtown club blowing free, but then again, you never know. "I'll tell you a funny story," says Allen, laughing as he begins. "I was doing a concert once, and I sometimes do play avant-garde saxophone. I'll do it at soundchecks and stuff, just fooling around. At the rehearsal I did that and the guys in the band started laughing and saying, 'You've got to do that on the show!' So I did it at one of the concerts, and the applause I got for playing the way I regularly do and the applause I got for playing as out as I could play was exactly the same."

That flexibility, and the ease with which he goes with the flow, is at the core of his being. "Harry is a great guy," says Sportiello, "and he carries himself well in any type of situation, musical or social. Most of all he is a very loyal person, a distinguished gentleman."

Kilgore echoes those sentiments, adding, "So many jazz musicians are difficult to get along with or have big egos, but Harry just flies in the face of that stereotype. He's so calm. He's not ruffled even when people around him are ruffled. He's a joy to work with. ... Plus, he may be the best musician that I know."

All About Jazz

Harry Allen's All Star New York Saxophone Band: The Candy Men

By Jack Bowers

November 28, 2016

At times, there is something to be said for glancing backward while moving forward, for saluting the past while embracing the present. In 1973, the Carpenters recorded another in a long series of hit songs, "Yesterday Once More," which noted how the past often parallels the present. Sometimes revisiting bygone days is a good thing; at other times, not so much. On his new album *The Candy Men*, tenor saxophonist Harry Allen delves even further into the murkiness of time to reclaim his "yesterday," modeling the ensemble's "all-star" reed section on the three-tenor-plus-baritone-sax framework made popular by Woody Herman's Second Herd in 1947-48 and generally known in musical circles as the "Four Brothers sound." Is that a good thing? Opinions may vary, but here is one unequivocal "yes" vote.

Allen raises the curtain, appropriately enough, with the iconic "Four Brothers," using not Jimmy Giuffre's classic chart but an arrangement by Al Cohn written for a later album, *The Four Brothers . . . Together Again!* While the solo order on various tracks isn't disclosed on the jacket or in Marc Myers' otherwise splendid liner notes, the ultra-smooth Allen and baritone Gary Smulyan are rather easy to pinpoint, and while tenors Grant Stewart and Eric Alexander are far closer in phrasing and perception, they too can be separated with due diligence. On "Four Brothers," the order seems to be Stewart, Allen, Alexander and Smulyan, after which everyone trades fours. Allen arranged every other track, starting with his own mid-tempo groover, "The One for You," on which the familiar Four Brothers sound precedes engaging solos by Smulyan, Alexander, Stewart and Allen (in that order; fingers crossed).

There's an "Early Autumn" vibe to the lovely ballad "How Are Things in Glocca Morra," a Bill Holman-inspired ambience to "After You've Gone" (not unlike the high-voltage chart Holman wrote for the Herman Herd in the mid-50s). Pianist Rossano Sportiello and drummer Kevin Kanner take their first solos here, proving that the term "all-star" doesn't apply merely to the saxophones. Indeed, the rhythm section (Sportiello, Kanner, bassist Joel Forbes) is sharp and persuasive throughout. Alexander is especially inspired on "I Wished on the Moon" and another of Allen's originals, the earnestly swinging "Blues in the Morning," which lead to the opulent "I Can See Forever," co-written by Allen and frequent collaborator Judy Carmichael (who also co-authored "The One for You"). And what would a Four Brothers salute be without at least one song by the great Zoot Sims? The gem chosen here is Sims / Gerry Mulligan's "The Red Door," a seductive swinger with solos to match by the reeds and Sportiello. There's more of the same on "The Candy Man" (a huge hit for Sammy Davis Jr. back in the day), Allen's breezy, Cohn-like "So There," Rodgers and Hart's plaintive "Nobody's Heart (Belongs to Me)" and the gently loping finale, "The Party's Over," introduced by the incomparable Judy Holliday in the Broadway smash *Bells Are Ringing*. While the reason for its title isn't laid bare, there's no doubt that *The Candy Men* is one sweet album from start to finish. As for the designation "all-star," one's customary reaction is to reach for the nearest grain of salt. No need for that here, as Allen's all-stars more than warrant the name. An appetizing banquet for lovers of jazz in its past and present tense.

All About Jazz

By Martin McFie

January 15, 2020

Harry Allen with Rossano Sportiello

The Jazz Corner

Hilton Head Island, SC

January 10-11, 2019

At a certain point in a musician's career the shorthand of describing them as influenced by, or sounding like, this or that great player from the past becomes redundant—Harry Allen sounds like Harry Allen.

His technique is as close to perfect as a swing tenor saxophone can get. Clear and clean, minimal and traditional, Allen plays mellow in the higher register, never forcing or splitting notes. He has an intensity of talent recognized and respected by a list of jazz men from a place up above the top shelf. He stands still, concentrating, and plays with his eyes closed. His quartet opened with Frank Loesser's music from "Guys and Dolls" and moved on to "Them There Eyes," a 1930 tune which Billie Holiday elevated to the status of a standard. They played it fast with exact timing but Allen remained static. Frank Duvall was on bass, while Ron Wiltrout raced around the drums. In his solo, pianist Rossano Sportiello slid into a stride section, working his left hand hard. Northern Italy produces great concert pianists and jazz pianists. Rossano Sportiello is both. Trained in Milan, he toured Europe with The Milano Jazz Gang before settling in New York City. His stride technique is simply superb.

A short commercial for Allen's Rhode Island is Famous for You (GAC Records, 2019) recording was followed by the quartet playing "Where do you Start?" It's a Johnny Mandel song which is the final track on the album. Allen was born in Washington, DC, but grew up in Rhode Island. The ballad introduction came in as breathy low notes from the tenor saxophone, reaching up to meet the rhythm pick up, drums brushing it along smoothly. On his final solo Allen picked up the pace and raced to a finish on a sustained high note while the musicians laid out a long flourish around him.

Count Basie and Jimmy "Mr. 5x5" Rushing, nicknamed for his portly measurements, wrote "Sent for you Yesterday" and here you are today. It was a blues which Basie's band played in 1939 while Rushing sang the first lines repeated "Don't the Moon look lonesome shining through the tree." The quartet took it at the original tempo, the bass line walking and brushes shuffling the drums. Allen opened and passed the melody to

Sportiello whose concert training showed in the delicate light touch he gave to higher notes leaving him headroom to build a powerful crescendo with chords. At the halfway mark the saxophone took back the lead and they were swinging hard supporting Allen's fast runs. Allen brought it down and they repeated a quiet phrase twice to end on sweet and subtle notes.

Allen detached the neck from his Selmer saxophone and used a long brush before leaving the stage to Sportiello for a solo. Drums and bass stood mute while, true to the original score, Sportiello gave a Chopin nocturne in C minor, lulling the audience with its gentle beauty. He shifted his position on the bench and seamlessly burst into a heavy left hand stride rhythm with variations on the nocturne, which brought grand applause. Allen returned to the stage, looked long and hard at Sportiello, and told him "You're fired."

The deceptive ease of Cole Porter's "Everything I Love" flowed with an almost Latin rhythm leading on to the next song "The Touch of your Lips" whose incomplete lyrics were written by Johnny Mercer before he passed away. His widow sent the lyrics to Barry Manilow who added the music and this unlikely pairing produced a soft ballad of great charm. The quartet interpreted it quietly, treating it gently which brought the 100-seat room to silence. Things can't stay quiet for too long, soon they were roaring along on a fast version of "Sweet Georgia Brown" the saxophone dipping and diving, the piano switching up into double time stride and a long drum solo crashing them into a slam stop to end the first set.

At the break Rossano Sportiello revealed the history of a 70 year-old English collector's Gold sovereign coin which he wears on a chain around his neck. It was a confirmation gift from his grandparents and all his four siblings each have one the same. In conversation he recalled recording Live at the Jazz Corner, Hilton Head with Nicki Parrott and Eddie Metz Jr., (Arbors Records, 2011). Harry Allen changed a reed, always taking care of his instrument, which is made up of around six hundred parts and pieces.

The second set started with "The World is Waiting for Sunrise" written under a pseudonym by concert pianist Ernest Seitz in 1919. Saxophone opened then Duvall picked out the melody on bass while Sportiello played a bass line with his left hand on piano. Next, they moved on to "The Touch of your Lips" a 1936 Ray Noble ballad filled with romance. Singer Hilary Gardner wrote the lyrics and Harry Allen the music to accompany the title track for "Rhode Island is Famous for You" which they played with practiced style.

Harry Allen was rock-solid, his music was bursting with swing, his timing was flawless and he remained ultimately focused. Beside him Rossano Sportiello had the precision of a concert pianist, mixed with the fun and flair of a jazz man.

Jazz Views

HARRY ALLEN'S ALL STAR NEW YORK SAXOPHONE BAND - The Candy Men

By Roy Booth

Arbors Records ARCD 19450

It doesn't seem that Harry Allen was the new face on the scene playing in an older style in the footsteps of Scott Hamilton but many albums later he has one of the voices in jazz to be reckoned with, he always manages to come up with new ideas and settings to demonstrate his undoubted talents.

This is not the first time the idea of an all saxophone front line group has been used there have been forerunners like Supersax, Prez Conference and Bud Shank and the Sax Section but this group is welcome addition.

It all started of course with the Woody Herman Second Herd when he employed four tenor saxophones and a baritone in the front line and the rest is history.

It is appropriate that the first track on the album is "Four Brothers" arranged by Al Cohn as this is where it all started. All the other arrangements are by Harry Allen and the first up is "The One For You" which was composed by Harry Allen and pianist Judy Carmichael a lightly swinging number which shows off the section in all its glory, there is a storming baritone solo by Gary Smulyan as well as all the tenors plus for good measure an incisive piano solo by Rossano Sportiello.

Another Harry Allen and Judy Carmichael composition is a bossa ballad "I Can See For Ever" not to be confused with "On A Clear Day" and is a feature for Eric Alexander on tenor and he plays this with great feeling.

The Rodgers and Hart ballad is beautifully harmonised by the section led with great skill by Grant Stewart and has some striking piano backing by pianist Rossano Sportiello. Harry Allen's "So There" must be a torturous piece to play by the saxophone section but they never miss a beat.

The album closes with a lightly swing "The Party's Over" it is a fitting piece to pay for a closer and makes you want to start the album from the first track again.

You may think it has all been done before but there is an extra edge to this group that sets them apart from other similar groups, it is a most enjoyable album and let's hope there may be another to come.

The Guardian

Allen, the American master of melodic, swinging tenor saxophone, and Lundgren, a Swedish pianist of infinite subtlety, make a good partnership. They think alike and clearly enjoy each other's playing as they immerse themselves in these nine songs by Johnny Mandel. Some of them, like the theme from M*A*S*H, are not obvious jazz material, but Mandel, like his contemporary Henry Mancini, has always been a jazzman at heart and it shows. Two numbers especially, Emily and The Shining Sea, evoke really inspired performances. Bassist Hans Backenroth and drummer Kristian Leth complete the quartet, applying an appropriately light touch.

Harry Allen & Scott Hamilton
Round Midnight
Challenge Records CR73348

By Steve Arloff

Harry Allen and Scott Hamilton follow the tradition of that other great and popular duo Al Cohn and Zoot Sims and the sound is not dissimilar to the other star in this tradition of tenor playing that was so popular in the 1960s, Stan Getz, and through that line of influence we can be taken back through Coleman Hawkins and others to Lester Young - what a pedigree! That is not to say that each of these musicians did not or do not have their own distinctive sound but the style is similar in all cases, characterised by an easy, laid back and mellow sound. Indeed the booklet notes confirm this when writing about Scott Hamilton clearly stating that he was most influenced by Zoot Sims and Ben Webster, another star in the tenor sax galaxy who Al, Zoot and Stan all gave as one of their tenor idols. They say that 'what goes around comes around' and so it is here, which is good for the current generation of jazz lovers who might otherwise regret having missed out on hearing the aforementioned four great tenorists live because they have the chance of hearing these two who continue to carry on the tradition. Though they have duetted together in concerts on many occasions this disc is only their third collective collaboration, here along with their preferred rhythm section and Harry's regular partners. It's a nice touch that it was Harry who had played an influential role to the young Scott

while he was honing his own craft and that now they should get to play together; a 'marriage' made in heaven perhaps, well jazz heaven at the very least. The two so perfectly complement each other it's easy to understand that playing together was something that was just meant to be. Kicking off the disc is My melancholy Baby and it was interesting to hear this rendition which is a classic approach and so different to the one that appears on another disc I recently reviewed Blues-a-plenty ALC99058 on which Ben Webster, no less, is the tenor soloist, along with alto saxophonist Johnny Hodges, and which dates from 1959 when Harry Allen was a 2 year old toddler and Scott was yet to be born for another 7 years. On this account each of these two genial tenorists are generous in the way they share the music with neither making any attempt to steal any thunder from the other, making for a partnership borne of mutual respect and the result is plain to hear. I was fascinated to learn, incidentally, that My melancholy Baby, though always linked with the 1920s, was in fact composed in 1912 when it was first sung by no other than William Frawley who famously made his name as the cantankerous miserly landlord of Desi Arnaz and Lucille Ball in the long-running 1950s TV sitcom I love Lucy. There follows a tribute to his partner here that Harry wrote entitled Great Scott that allows each to take three choruses while pianist Romano gets a spot and then the duo get to indulge in some sax pyrotechnics. How am I to know the booklet informed me was an obscure song that though written in 1929 waited until Billie Holliday recorded it in 1944. Romano sets what the notes describe as a 'basie groove' then taken up by Scott, leading to improvisation from Harry and bassist Joel Forbes gets moment to shine. It was interesting that when The opener comes along it turns out to have been a tune penned by Bill Potts for a 1960 album by...Al Cohn and Zoot Sims! That these two tenor players are the natural inheritors of the sound that those two stars forged is very evident here with those distinctive, gentle, mellow lines. This groove is then repeated in a particularly bossa inspired version of Baubles, bangles and beads which itself emerged into the public consciousness from the musical Kismet that was so controversial when it first came out due to allegations of plagiarism because the main song was an almost note for note steal from Borodin's Polovtsian Dances from the opera Prince Igor. The duo make a beautiful job of the three bs and that rocking Latin beat perfectly expresses the tune bringing out all the nuances within it. Hey Lock refers to Eddie "lockjaw" Davis, its composer and the duo had always wanted to feature it and as the notes say 'The wait was worth it' to which I must add a resounding 'I agree'! Lover, that wonderful Rodgers and Hart number which dates from 1932 and Flight of the foo birds (where do they get these titles?!) allow both tenors to have a pretend trade off with each other but it's all good natured sparring and as the note writer Scott Yanow rightly says it is the listener that wins. The concluding track is the album's sole ballad and title track and is the right note to end on as Round midnight is a wonderful tune that was a signature one for one of its co-writers Thelonious Monk and brings out the lazy sounding style as much as anything else on the disc with the two tenors seemingly vying with each other while in fact proving what a brilliant partnership it is when they manage to play together as here but regrettably as the notes emphasise they were both straight off again after the recording to play again to their thousands of fans the world over. The rhythm section play such a key role of support for the two,

whose interplay is the record's *raison d'être*, that they can easily get forgotten but they shouldn't be because it is that rock solid support that helps make the experience what it is, a joy from start to finish!

BBC

Harry Allen New York State of Mind

Top quality songs treated in a respectfully intelligent and virtuosic way. Patrick Johns New York State of Mind, the second release on Challenge Records by tenor saxophonist Harry Allen, is a collection of well-known and rather-less-obvious songs all connected by a common theme: the Big Apple. As with his previous release Hits by Brits, Allen uses the excellent rhythm section of pianist Rossano Sportiello, bassist Joel Forbes and drummer Chuck Riggs, and they are joined on six tracks by the wonderful trombone of John Allred, a star in his own right.

Whilst Allen's playing shows clear influences from more modern masters, it is firmly rooted in the classic style of the 40s and 50s saxophone giants such as Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, Zoot Sims and Stan Getz. And this is no bad thing, especially when combined with the right song choices, something else at which Allen excels.

With a handful of exceptions, all the songs here date from the early days of jazz, the kind of material that Allen's forefathers also knew and played. These include rarer songs such as Sidewalks of New York (dating back to 1894) and Cole Porter's Down in the Depths on the 90th Floor, all played with Allen's confidently robust swagger and seemingly inexhaustible melodic invention.

The band also really swings on more familiar territory, the standout tracks being Puttin' on the Ritz and what the inlay notes remind us is "one of the good old ones": Chinatown My Chinatown. Special credit here, too, to Allred, who sounds like Abe Lincoln, Carl Fontana and Jack Teagarden all rolled into one incredible trombonist.

Even the two forays into the 1970s work beautifully: the title track is a respectful version of Billy Joel's 1970s hit, and a skilful reinterpretation of New York, New York really shows what is possible with this song once all Sinatra tokenism is removed.

This album is perfect for those who like to hear top quality songs treated in a respectfully intelligent and yet still virtuosic way. It may not break any new ground, but who wants to do that when there's still so much more to say about the old?

The Chestertown Spy

A Salute to Getz: Saxophonist Harry Allen Celebrates Bossa Nova

by Becca Newell

July 25, 2018

Infectious melodies, understated rhythms, and harmoniously rich tunes—the Monty Alexander Jazz Festival is adding a little samba to its Saturday lineup.

The matinee show, on September 1st, will highlight an extraordinary range of American and Brazilian musicians, featuring tenor/alto saxophonist Harry Allen.

For those unfamiliar with bossa nova jazz, think of the 1965 Grammy Award-winning Record of the Year “The Girl from Ipanema”. The worldwide hit by American saxophonist Stan Getz and Brazilian guitarist Joro Gilberto perfectly encapsulates the fusion of American jazz and Brazilian samba, which it inevitably popularized across the globe after its release.

“[Getz] was one of the greatest jazz saxophonists ever and probably the greatest technical saxophonist ever,” says tenor/alto saxophonist Harry Allen. “He had an incredible sound and melodicism and that’s why he was chosen to record with some of the best Brazilian artists at the time.”

Allen refers to Getz as one of his heroes, so it’s only fitting that his performance at the Avalon be a tribute to this pioneer of modern jazz. He’ll be joined on stage by vocalist Maucha Adnet, drummer Duduka da Fonseca, and vibraphonist Chuck Redd. More specially, their “Salute to Stan Getz” will be an homage to the Getz/Gilberto collaboration of which “The Girl from Ipanema” was the first track on the 1964 album. With more than thirty recordings to his name, Allen has been called the “Frank Sinatra of the tenor Saxophone,” renowned for his inventive, lyrical tone that’s rooted in tradition. “From the 1930s through the 1950s, saxophonists strived to get a beautiful mellow sound,” he says. “And so, in a way, I’m a throwback because there aren’t many saxophone players today who prefer that older approach to sound.”

Allen’s admiration of jazz’ early sound even extends into the instruments he uses—a saxophone and mouthpiece that were made in the 1930s. According to Allen, his goal isn’t to recreate the sound of that era, but rather incorporate that subtle, more melodic approach in his own playing.

Similarly, vocalist Adnet, drummer da Fonseca, and vibraphonist Redd are deeply familiar with the origins of bossa nova jazz, each having a strong connection to the origins of this music. Both Adnet and da Fonseca worked with iconic composer, Antônio Carlos Jobim, who played piano on the Getz/Gilberto album. And Redd played drums for Charlie Byrd, who was one of the key jazz musicians, along with Stan Getz, to bring Brazilian music to the United States in ‘60s.

A native of Brazil, Adnet spent 10 years performing and recording with Jobim before he passed away in 1994. While touring with him, she visited America for the first time, eventually moving to New York City in 1987.

With her plush, soulful tone, it's unsurprising that Adnet has performed with a plethora of prominent figures in both worlds of jazz and Brazilian music, including Claudio Roditi, Herbie Mann, the late Oscar Castro Neves, and the Carnegie Hall Jazz Band. Critics continually praise the alto for her ability to sing with seemingly effortless intensity.

"A Salute to Getz" is sure to provide the ideal showcase for Allen's trademark tone and Adnet's rich and sultry voice. Add to that da Fonseca and Redd, and you've got a delightfully rhythmic, sweetly swingin' treat.

For more information or to purchase tickets, visit Jazzonthechesapeake.com or call 410-819-0380. The Monty Alexander Jazz Festival is partially underwritten by the Maryland State Arts Council and the Talbot County Arts Council. Jazz on the Chesapeake is a program of Chesapeake Music.

NPR

Trio Da Paz With Harry Allen In Concert: Newport Jazz Festival 2010

Three top-tier musicians play Brazilian music literally from the inside out: They're all from Brazil. Romero Lubambo, Nilson Matta and Duduka da Fonseca have been performing together for two decades, racking up collaborations with the entire spectrum of jazz musicians. At the CareFusion Newport Folk Festival in Newport, R.I., they welcome a soulful tenor saxophonist.

Personnel: Romero Lubambo, guitar; Nilson Matta, bass; Duduka da Fonseca, drums; Harry Allen, tenor saxophone.

Scott Hamilton & Harry Allen, Heavy Juice

By Dave Gelly

Scott Hamilton & Harry Allen
Heavy Juice
(Concord Jazz CCD 2258-2)

The tenor saxophone duet is a classic jazz format, and the recipe for success is for the players to have similar but not identical styles. This is exactly what we have here. Hamilton and Allen are probably the two finest exponents of swing tenor alive today and both play with tremendous poise and fluency and share a perfect understanding of the idiom. Hamilton's tone is bold and forthright and he builds his solos with a fine sense of the dramatic, while Allen's approach is more lyrical, with an attractive haze around the tone at slower tempos. To hear them working through these eight numbers, ranging from Gillespie's 'Groovin' High' to Ellington's sumptuous 'Warm Valley' is to experience two masters in perfect accord and at the peak of their form. The rhythm section, led by pianist John Bunch, creates a lean, undemonstrative but compelling swing.

Broadway World
BWW Reviews: Harry Allen Plays Feinstein's at Loews Regency

By Stephen Sorokoff
Oct. 5, 2011

52nd Street was the Jazz Center of NYC in the 1930s 40s & 50s. For those yearning for great music, the ambience (and black & white photos) of that glorious bygone era, you can now find it on 61st Street & Park Avenue. Harry Allen's Monday Night Jazz brings you back to that time with an assemblage of some of the finest musicians and vocalists in the world. It all takes place in the glamorous setting of Feinstein's and with dinner, dancing plus 3 sets of music. Adding to the fun were these great musicians "hanging" with the audience on their breaks. The night I was there the group consisted of (I'll avoid the superlatives) Mike Renzi on piano, Dan Barrett trombone, Joel Forbes bass, Chuck Riggs drums and of course Harry Allen on sax. The vocalists were Rebecca Kilgore, Lynn Roberts, and Nicki Parrott. Harry's next show is an evening of Brazilian music with Jobim alumni Maucha Adnet and Deduce DaFonseca on November 7th.

Jazz Views

By Roy Booth

HARRY ALLEN - Something About Jobim
Stunt STUCD 15122

Harry Allen (tnr) Hellio Alves (pno) Rodolfo Stroeter (bass) Tutty Moreno (drs)
Special Guest Joyce (voice & gtr) on various tracks
Recorded New York, 6 & 7 July 2015

Although this album is issued under Harry Allen's name the group is usually fronted by vocalist and guitarist Joyce who is present on three tracks.

Harry Allen would appear to have an affinity with Brazilian music and Jobim's compositions in particular having already recorded with an all star Brazilian band on the Arbors label.

There are talented Brazilian composers but it is Antonio Carlos Jobim who is the most outstanding one of them all and no collection of Brazilian music is complete without a handful of his compositions.

The album opens with "Dindi" one of Jobim's best compositions and Harry Allen gives a sensitive readings bringing out the beauty of the tune.

"Sue Ann" is a beautiful ballad and Harry Allen's tender brings out the best of it's hidden depths, "Falande De Amor" is another of Jobim's compositions very much in the same field and includes a piano solo which supports Harry Allen's delicate touch.

The vocals by Joyce are very much in the Brazilian tradition and you either love this type of singing or have little feeling for it.

Don't purchase this album expecting hard swinging music or you will be disappointed but the whole album is treated with great taste and a feel for Brazilian music.

The backing trio pull the whole thing together with their great understanding of this style of music.

The Guardian

Harry Allen & Scott Hamilton: Round Midnight – review

By Dave Gelly

July 21, 2012

The two best swing tenor saxophonists alive today work so companionably together that listening to them brings on a smile. It's a perfect partnership. Even when they're both playing at once, and going at a fair lick, their two lines twist and turn with practised ease and never any danger of a collision. The tones are warm and hearty, the phrases unfailingly supple and melodic. They're accompanied by Allen's regular rhythm section, bassist Joel Forbes, drummer Chuck Riggs and the remarkable Rossano Sportiello, one of the most fluent and stylistically wide-ranging pianists in jazz today.