# Art Pepper - The Trip (1977)

Written by bluesever
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 1  Trip (Original Take)  (8:57)     2  Trip (Alternate Take)  (13:03)    3  Song for Richard (6:20)    [play]    4  Sweet Love of Mine  (6:37)    5  Junior Cat  (7:50)    6  Summer Knows (7:11)    7  Red Car  (5:47)                  Personnel:  Art Pepper (saxophone)  George Cables (piano)  David Williams (bass)  Elvin Jones (drums).

Art Pepper made a name for himself around Los Angeles in the '50s as a leading light in the style then known as West Coast jazz -- a cool alternative to the hot hard bop being made in East Coast cities like New York and Philadelphia. Pepper never really fit the cool stereotype, however; he was too incendiary a soloist (influenced by Lester Young, perhaps, and Bird certainly), more inclined to inject overt anger and passion into his playing than contemporaries like Getz or Mulligan. By the time these sides were made in 1976, any residual coolness had been displaced by hot emotionalism and an almost manic intensity. The lessons of John Coltrane had clearly been absorbed, harmonically and otherwise; not only was Pepper more assertive than ever, but he also took more chances. Polish is for shoes and fingernails: by the late '70s Pepper was rough, raw, and nakedly vulnerable. Every solo this late in his career was an adventure. On this record the adventure is joined by ex-Coltrane drummer Elvin Jones, who doesn't interact with Pepper as much as one might expect, but nevertheless puts down the hard grooves the altoist needed to be at his best. There's a bit of a tentative cast to much of this record, almost as if the musicians were not yet completely comfortable with one another. Pepper's playing is first-rate, however: his interpretation of Michel Legrand's melody, "The Summer Knows," is by itself worth the price of the album. Given that he would not live many years longer after its recording, this one is a keeper. ---Chris Kelsey, All Music Guide

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