Phil Woods – Chasin' The Bird (1998)

Written by bluesever
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1. Chasin' The Bird (Parker) 2. Israel (Carisi) 3. Everything Happens To Me (Dennis/Adair) 4. Autumn Thieves (Woods) 5. Charlie's Wig (Parker)   [play] 6. Tribute To Blue (Lynch) 7. Clinicology (Woods)
Musicians: Phil Woods - alto saxophone Brian Lynch - trumpet Bill Charlap - piano Steve Gilmore - bass Bell Goodwin – drums

Phil Woods is at the peak of his powers during these 1997 sessions for Venus, leading his regular quintet (Brian Lynch, Bill Charlap, Steve Gilmore, and Bill Goodwin) through a set of songs he's played for decades, along with some originals likely written for this outing. The alto saxophonist navigates Charlie Parker's "Chasin' the Bird" and "Charlie's Wig" with the finesse of the master that he is. The interplay between the leader and Lynch in the former tune indicates that the younger musician is a force to be reckoned with. They also work well together in the dissonant "Israel," long a favorite of boppers. Woods' unaccompanied introduction to "Everything Happens to Me" is simply breathtaking. Woods is also a fairly prolific composer. "Autumn Thieves" is a barely disguised reworking of the standard "Autumn Leaves" (also indicating his love of puns in the title) that swings nicely. The source of the rapid fire "Clinicology" is a little less obvious at first ("Cherokee"), though little doubt remains once the quintet gets cooking. Lynch contributed "Tribute to Blue," a strutting, yet very lyrical hard bop vehicle. Charlap, who has since left the group to lead his own trio, is one of the greatest pianists of his generation. Gilmore and Goodwin have continuously worked with Woods since 1975; enough said. ---Ken Dryden, allmusic.com

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