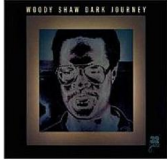


Woody Shaw - Dark Journey (1997)

Written by bluesever

Wednesday, 13 June 2012 17:14 - Last Updated Wednesday, 24 June 2015 19:51

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CD 1 (1977 – 87): 1 *Jitterbug Waltz* (Maltby, Waller) 2 *Spiderman Blues* (Shaw) 3 *Imagination* (Burke, VanHeusen) 4 *Solid* (Rollins) 5 *Dat Dere* (Brown, Timmons) 6 *Speak Low* (Nash, Weill) 7 *The Woody Woodpecker Song* (Idriss, Tibbles) Woody Shaw - Trumpet Anthony Braxton - Clarinet (1) Muhal Richard Abrams - Piano (1) Cecil McBee - Bass (1) Victor Lewis - Drums (1) Cedar Walton - Piano (2) Buster Williams - Bass (2) Victor Jones - Drums (2, 4, 6, 7) Kirk Lightsey - Piano (3, 5) Steve Turre - Trombone (3, 5) Ray Drummond - Bass (3, 5) Carl Allen - Drums (3, 5) Kenny Garrett - Sax (Alto) (4, 6) Kenny Barron - Piano (4, 6, 7) Neil Swainson - Bass (4, 6, 7) CD 2 (1965 – 74):

1 *Nutville* (Silver) 2 *The Moontrane* (Shaw) 3 *Tetragon* (Henderson) 4 *Baloo Baloo* (Johnson) 5 *Cassandranite* (Shaw) 6 *Obsequious* (Young) 7 *Katrina Ballerina* (Shaw) 8 *Sanyas* (Turre) 13:05

Woody Shaw - Trumpet J.J. Johnson - Trombone (1) Joe Henderson - Sax (Tenor) (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6) Horace Silver - Piano (1) Bob Cranshaw - Bass (1) Roger Humphries - Drums (1) Larry Young - Organ (2, Piano (5, 6) Elvin Jones - Drums (2) Herbie Hancock - Piano (3, 4) Paul Chambers - Bass (3, 4) Joe Chambers - Drums (3, 4, 5, 6) Ron Carter - Bass (5, 6) Azar Lawrence - Sax (Soprano), Sax (Tenor) (7,8) Steve Turre - Trombone (7, 8) Onaje Allan Gumbs - Piano, Piano (Electric) (7, 8) Cecil McBee - Bass (7,8) Victor Lewis - Drums (7, 8) Tony Waters - Congas (7) Guilherme Franco - Percussion (7)

Dark Journey is a 2-CD compilation of some of the best recordings by the great trumpeter Woody Shaw. Tracks are gathered from recordings dating from 1965 to 1987, and most impressive is the breadth of the guest list: Anthony Braxton, Muhal Richard Abrams, Cedar Walton, Kenny Garrett, J. J. Johnson, Joe Henderson, Horace Silver, Larry Young, Elvin Jones, Herbie Hancock, Paul Chambers, and Ron Carter, along with Shavians like Steve Turre and Onaje Allen Gumbs.

Anyone unfamiliar with the astoundingly accomplished trumpet work of Woody Shaw should start with Dark Journey. There are two tracks from what is arguably his best album, The

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Moontrane. His incisive 1965 album with Joe Henderson, Cassandranite, is represented with three cuts. One track is taken from Woody's sideman gig on Larry Young's legendary Unity, and one from another Blue Note classic, Horace Silver, with the man who was then the Hard Bop New Pop and J. J. Johnson's sharp-as-a-tack trombone. There are five tracks from Woody's later albums, Solid (three) and Imagination (two). These should dispel any doubt that the man's powers were failing near the end — although a skillful choice of material may be compensating for the loss of a step or two.

It seems like a long way from J. J. Johnson to Anthony Braxton, but Shaw sounds at home in all settings. Of course, the most maverick of the guest stars — Abrams and Braxton — play it straighter here than they are usually given credit for doing, dancing with Shaw through an utterly delightful rendering of "Jitterbug Waltz," a tune made famous by one of Shaw's early boosters, Eric Dolphy. "Spiderman Blues," from 1983, show our man in fine form, as does the aching ballad "Imagination" (1987) but in another way. Steve Turre's trombone on "Imagination" is especially noteworthy. Shaw is subdued here but shows some of the old fire on a dark take of Bobby Timmons' loping "Dat Dere," from the same session.

The material from Cassandranite and The Moontrane is the pick of this lot. "Cassandranite" itself and "Sanyas" from The Moontrane are among the best tracks this trumpeter ever recorded, and he recorded a lot of great music. Thanks to Joel Dorn and 32 Jazz, Woody Shaw may finally begin to get some of the recognition he so richly deserves. ---Robert Spencer, allaboutjazz.com

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