

Saori Yano - BeBop at The Savoy (2010)

Written by bluesever

Sunday, 17 November 2013 17:17 - Last Updated Sunday, 17 November 2013 17:21

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01. *The Kicker* (Joe Henderson) 02. *Sweet Cakes* (Blue Mitchell) 03. *Blues Walk* (Lou Donaldson) 04. *You'd Be So Nice to Come Home To* (Cole Porter) 05. *S' Wonderful* (George Gershwin) 06. *Lullaby of Birdland* (G. Shearing-G. Weiss) 07. *Olive Refractions* (Norman Simmons) 08. *Stardust* (H. Carmichael-M. Parish) 09. *Five Spot After Dark* (Benny Golson) 10. *How High the Moon* (M. Lewis-N. Hamilton) 11. *Laura Peacock* (Saori Yano) Musicians: Saori Yano (Alto Saxophone) Jim Rotondi (Trumpet) Randy Johnston (Guitar) Pat Bianchi (Hammond Organ) Fukushi Tainaka (Drums)

With her debut album appearing at the age of 16, Saori Yano has been the hottest rising star in the Jazz scene ever since. This album is her first best album, and the music is filled with the essence of her life so far. Her relationship with Jazz has been dramatic in its own way ? beginning with the school band, which she joined in 4th grade. Losing out in a battle of “rock-paper-scissors” to choose instruments, she found herself stuck with the alto saxophone. Her first encounter with Jazz was the Jaco Pastorius album that she found among her father’s CD collection. It was in this album where she heard Charlie Parker’s “Donna Lee” for the very first time, and fell in love with Jazz. At 14, she read Billie Holiday’s biography “Strange Fruit” and found out that Billie at 14 was performing in Jazz Clubs to make a living. Feeling that she too must play in Jazz Clubs, Saori picked up the phone and called every Jazz Club that was listed on the last page of a Jazz magazine that she happened to have. Nobody was interested in hiring this unknown teenage “player” - except one club who invited her in for an audition.

The trend in the Japanese Jazz scene these days is the increase of “highly-educated” newcomers. Young artists make recording debuts with diplomas from prestigious schools such as Berkely School of Music, The Juilliard School, Tokyo National University of Fine Arts □ Music, Toho Gakuen School of Music, etc. However for Saori, she has never received any formal music education. Her training has always been “on the job”, performing more than 200 gigs a year at various clubs. Along the way, she has met great artists like Frank Wess, George Coleman, Toshiko Akiyoshi, Jimmy Cobb, and James Moody, who have inspired her greatly to

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grow as an artist and also as a human being. Saori met Jimmy Cobb on her tour supporting her third album "SAKURA STAMP", and he invited her over to New York to do a gig at the famous Smoke Jazz Club ☐ Lounge. This was her first overseas performance, and a live recording was made and was released as the album "Parker's Mood". James Moody was the guest musician invited to the supporting tour of this album. Recognizing Saori's lack of theoretical backbone, he took every chance to give her a theoretical lesson. Even after the tour, he sent her textbooks advising her to practice certain etudes. Just this past April, Saori flew over to California to receive lessons from Moody, and their master-apprentice relationship is growing stronger and stronger. Last year, Saori recorded her new album "Groovin' High" with a big combo with members such as James Moody and Slide Hampton, opening up to a new musical horizon of large ensembles. Hitting the road once again with this album, she celebrated her 20th birthday in October at the Blue Note in Nagoya.

Saori recently made her first appearance in a television commercial for a stylish line of hair-care products, of which her new tune was featured in. Titled the Asian Beauty series, the commercial will be broadcasted nationwide in Japan from mid-May. Filmed in Los Angeles, the commercial is a collage of Saori on stage. It is so full of great shots of her, one might think it is a Saori Yano promo clip. This will definitely boost her celebrity in Japan.

Saori took this chance to take 12 tunes from her previously released four original albums, and add a new tune that is featured in the commercial, and release it as a Best Album. She has always focused on Bebop music, such as tunes from Charlie Parker or Dizzy Gillespie, and jazz standards loved by these great masters. In addition to these repertoires, her self-penned original "new standards" of Jazz can be heard here, plus the theme tune of the ten o'clock news on TV-Asahi (Hodo Station), "Open Mind" by Takashi Matsunaga. Her deep, unique sound and phrasing may seem a bit unlikely for her young age. This may be explained by the fact that her instrument is a vintage Conn saxophone. This album will come with a DVD of Saori's promo clip, which will allow you to enjoy Saori's world from both ears and eyes. --- yanosaori.com

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