

Branford Marsalis Quartet – Braggtown (2006)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Jack Baker* (14:12) 2. *Hope* (11:02) 3. *Fate* (8:24) 4. *Blakzilla* (12:39) 5. *O Solitude* (7:48) 6. *Sir Roderick The Aloof* (5:45) 7. *Black Elk Speaks* (14:18) Branford Marsalis - tenor & soprano sax Joey Calderazzo - piano Eric Revis - bass Jeff "Tain" Watts – drums

Saxophonist Branford Marsalis' *Braggtown* finds the ever-evolving tenor man in a more action-oriented state of mind than his contemplative 2004 release *Eternal*. Having tackled the gigantically epic task of reworking John Coltrane's most well-known opus "A Love Supreme" on *Footsteps of Our Fathers* in 2002, it should come as no surprise that the Coltrane sound still lingers palpably over all the music on *Braggtown*. But rather than imitating or aping Coltrane's style, Marsalis has ingested the legendary innovator's concepts, utilizing them in his own unique way. Working once again with his stellar rhythm section of pianist Joey Calderazzo, bassist Eric Revis, and longtime partner in "time" drummer Jeff "Tain" Watts, Marsalis has come up with a collection of original songs perfectly suited for the muscular and sensitive group interplay this ensemble excels at. To these ends, "Jack Baker" is a funky and angular call to arms with Marsalis inverting a repeated theme as the band roils around him. Quickly changing gears, Marsalis moves to his trademark soprano for the gorgeously plaintive Calderazzo ballad "Hope." The noirish, dramatic "Blakzilla" features a bawdy and moody rubato opening that soon descends to a hyperkinetic bluesy mid-section. Interestingly, recalling his superb classical album *Creation*, Marsalis has re-purposed Henry Purcell's stately and sad ballad "O Solitude" here as well. The other tracks on *Braggtown* are equally engaging and, as evidenced by the fiery, avant-garde burn out closer "Black Elk Speaks," speak to Marsalis' abundant creative energy. --- Matt Collar, allmusic.com

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