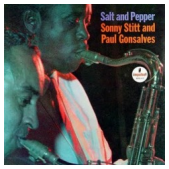
Sonny Stitt & Paul Gonsalves - Salt and Pepper (1963)



01. Salt and Pepper 7:49 02. S'posin' 6:18 03. Theme from Lord ofthe Flies 2:25 play 04. Perdido 12:37 05. Stardust 6:05 06. Surfin' 4:08 07. Lester Leaps In 6:20 08. Estralita 3:14 play
09. Please Don't Talk About Me When I'm Gone 4:31 10. Touchy 5:10 11. Never ---SH! 5:03 12. My Mother's Eyes 4:05 13. I'm Getting Sentimental over You 4:14
Personnel: Paul Gonsalves - Sax (Tenor), Performer Hank Jones - Piano Sonny Stitt - Sax (Alto), Sax (Tenor) Milt Hinton - Bass Osie Johnson - Drums Bob Thiele - Producer Al Lucas – Bass

This 72-minute CD starts off with one of the underrated gems of the 1960s, an exciting matchup by tenors Sonny Stitt and Paul Gonsalves. Other than the brief throwaway "Theme from Lord of the Flies" (producer Bob Thiele's idea), this is very much a jam session set, with "Salt and Pepper" being a heated medium-tempo blues and the two competitive tenors stretching out on "S'posin'" and a lengthy "Perdido." Actually, the most memorable selection from the date is the one on which Stitt switches to alto, "Stardust." His beautiful playing behind Gonsalves' warm melody statement raises the session to the classic level. Also included on this consistently exciting CD is a Sonny Stitt quartet set originally titled Now! Although Stitt (doubling on alto and tenor) recorded scores of quartet sessions, he sounds particularly inspired here, especially on such offbeat material as "Estralita," the Dixieland standard "Please Don't Talk About Me When I'm Gone," and "My Mother's Eyes." Highly recommended to bebop and straight-ahead jazz fans. ---Scott Yanow

Edward Boatner Stitt, 2 February 1924, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, d. 22 July 1982, Washington, DC, USA. Starting out on alto saxophone, Stitt gained his early experience playing

in the big bands led by Tiny Bradshaw and Billy Eckstine. Influenced by Charlie Parker and by the many fine young beboppers he encountered on the Eckstine band, Stitt quickly developed into a formidable player. He played with Dizzy Gillespie, Kenny Clarke and others but by the late 40s was concerned that he should develop a more personal style. In pursuit of this he switched to tenor saxophone and formed the first of many bands he was to lead and co-lead over the years. Among his early collaborators was Gene Ammons, whom he had met during the Eckstine stint.

In the late 50s Stitt was with Jazz At The Philharmonic and in 1960 was briefly with Miles Davis. Throughout the 60s and 70s Stitt maintained a high level of performances at home and abroad, despite periodic bouts of ill health generated by his drug addictions. In the early 60s he recorded with Paul Gonsalves, Salt And Pepper, and in the early 70s toured with Gillespie as a member of the Giants Of Jazz, continuing to make many fine record albums. His early 80s albums included Sonny, Sweets And Jaws (1981), with Harry Edison and Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis, and a fine set made just weeks before his death.

Although his early career was overshadowed by Parker, Stitt was never a copyist. Indeed, his was a highly original musical mind, as became apparent after he switched to tenor and forged a new and appreciative audience for his work. In later years he played alto saxophone as often as he played tenor, by which time it was plain to see that the comparisons to Parker were largely the result of critical pigeonholing.

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