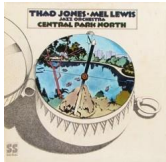


Thad Jones & Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra □ – Central Park North (1969)

Written by bluesever
Monday, 17 July 2017 15:06 -

Thad Jones & Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra □ – Central Park North (1969)



1 *Tow Away Zone* 4:27 2 *Quietude* 4:04 3 *Jive Samba* 8:51 4 *The Groove Merchant* 5:09 5 *Big Dipper* 5:51 6 *Central Park North* 9:14 Arranged By – Thad Jones Bass, Electric Bass [Fender] – Richard Davis Drums – Mel Lewis Flugelhorn – Thad Jones Guitar – Barry Galbraith, Sam Brown Piano – Roland Hanna Saxophone – Eddie Daniels, Jerome Richardson, Jerry Dodgion, Joe Farrell, Joe Temperly Trombone – Bennie Powell, Cliff Heather, Eddie Bert, Jimmy Knepper Trumpet – Danny Moore, Jimmy Nottingham, Richard Williams Trumpet [1st] – Snooky Young

One doesn't automatically think of big bands when remembering late-'60s jazz, though big bands like the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Orchestra continued to make stimulating recordings. *Central Park North*, recorded and released in 1969, testifies that one could be a big band and progressive at the same time. Flügelhornist Jones and percussionist Lewis are joined by a large cast of players, including tenor Joe Farrell, trombonist Jimmy Knepper, and pianist Roland Hanna. The music runs the gauntlet from funky soul-jazz to more gentle traditional work, sometimes within the same piece. Jones' "Tow Away Zone" begins like a rather typical late-'60s composition (horns and organ with a soulful groove), but as the individual players cut loose with excellent solo work -- built within a multi-layered arrangement -- the piece takes on a character of its own. "Quietude" moves in the opposite direction, living up to its title by keeping things low-key, while "Jazz Samba" is a nine-minute romp with some great piccolo work. The swinging "Big Dipper" and ambitious title cut bring *Central Park North* to a satisfying close. The album, at 37 minutes, will seem a bit short by post-millennium standards, but the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Orchestra makes every minute count. The 2004 reissue will be welcomed by fans of adventurous big band music. ---Ronnie D. Lankford, Jr., AllMusic Review

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