

Chet Baker and Art Pepper – Playboys (1956)

Written by bluesever

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1. *For Minors Only* [play](#) 2. *Minor Yours* 3. *Resonant Emotions* 4. *Tynan Time* 5. *Picture of Heath* 6. *For Miles and Miles* 7. *C.T.A.* Musicians: Chet Baker (trumpet), Art Pepper (alto sax), Phil Urso (tenor sax), Carl Perkins (piano), Curtis Counce (bass), Lawrence Marable (drums).

These Halloween 1956 sides originally appeared as Playboys in 1961 on Pacific Jazz. Myth and rumor persist that, under legal advice from the publisher of a similarly named magazine, the collection would have to be retitled. When the CD version of the same material was issued in the early '90s, it had been accurately christened Picture of Heath -- as more than half of the tracks are Jimmy Heath compositions. Since then, a CD version sporting the original provocative '50s pinup cover and the name Playboys has also surfaced. Regardless of title, however, the music is the absolute same. These are the third sessions to feature the dynamic duo of Art Pepper (alto sax) and Chet Baker (trumpet). Their other two meetings had produced unequivocal successes. The first was during a brief July 1956 session at the Forum Theater in L.A. Baker joined forces with Pepper's sextet, ultimately netting material for the disc Route. Exactly three months to the day later, Pepper and Baker reconvened to record tracks for the Chet Baker Big Band album. The quartet supporting Baker and Pepper on Playboys includes Curtis Counce (bass), Phil Urso (tenor sax), Carl Perkins (piano), and Larance Marable (drums). Baker and Pepper have an instinctual rapport that yields outstanding interplay. The harmony constant throughout the practically inseparable lines that Baker weaves with Pepper drives the bop throughout the slinky "For Minors Only." The soloists take subtle cues directly off each other, with considerable contributions from Perkins, Counce, and Marable. With the notorious track record both Baker and Pepper had regarding other decidedly less successful duets, it is unfortunate that more recordings do not exist that captured their special bond. These thoroughly enjoyable and often high-energy sides are perfect for bop connoisseurs as well as mainstream jazz listeners. --- Lindsay Planer, allmusic.com

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