

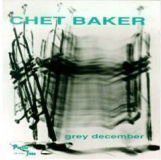
## Chet Baker - Grey December (1957)

Written by bluesever

Saturday, 20 March 2010 20:56 - Last Updated Sunday, 17 August 2014 19:13

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## Chet Baker - Grey December (1957)



1. *Grey December*
2. *I Wish I Knew*
3. *Someone to Watch over Me*
4. *This Is Always*
5. *Headline*
6. *Ergo*
7. *Bockhanal*
8. *Bockhanal [Alternate Take]*
9. *Dandy Line*
10. *Dandy Line [Alternate Take]*
11. *Pro Defunctus*
12. *Little Old Lady*
13. *Little Old Lady [Alternate Take]*
14. *Moonlight Becomes You*
15. *Moonlight Becomes You [Alternate Take]*
16. *Goodbye*
17. *Goodbye [Alternate Take]*

Chet Baker - Trumpet, Vocals Russ Freeman - Piano Herb Geller - Sax (Alto), Sax (Tenor)  
Bob Gordon - Sax (Baritone) Corky Hale - Harp Shelly Manne - Drums Red Mitchell - Bass  
Joe Mondragon - Bass Jack Montrose - Arranger, Sax (Tenor) Bob Neel - Drums Bud Shank -  
Flute

Two stray Chet Baker 10" titles and a few associated alternate takes are gathered on this single disc. Grey December is one of the better CD reissues featuring Baker's early-'50s recordings on Pacific Jazz, the purveyors of West Coast cool. The instrumental sides feature two septet sessions in December of 1953 and the vocal sextet session dates to February of 1955 -- all three of which feature Baker and pianist Russ Freeman. Rather than present these sides chronologically, the four vocal tracks precede the decidedly lengthier 1953 instrumental sessions -- a programming decision that works remarkably well. Enthusiasts of Baker's

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laid-back vocals should consider the February 1955 sessions as essential. The combination of Bud Shank's ethereal flute work when married to Baker's muted vocals create an intense burst of melancholy. The uneven tempo and minor chord progressions featured on the title track as well as "I Wish I Knew" are irresistible in their appeal to fans of the genre. Baker's soft-toned trumpet solos match his vocals in spirit and passion. Even the hapless optimism of "Someone to Watch Over Me" is tinged in noir pathos. A much more traditional setting for Baker can be heard on the septet sides. Although the instinctual interaction between Baker and Freeman shines throughout, "Headline," "Moonlight Becomes You," and the up-tempo swinger "A Dandy Line" best exemplify everything positive about that musical relationship. The pair intertwine their melodies so closely and carefully it can be difficult to separate them. On the CD pressing, alternate takes of "Bockhanal," "A Dandy Line," "Little Old Lady," "Moonlight Becomes You," and "Goodbye" are also included. ---Lindsay Planer, Rovi

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