

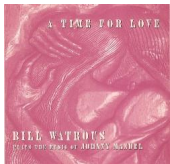
## Bill Watrous – Plays The Music of Johnny Mandel: A Time For Love (1993)

Written by bluesever

Tuesday, 17 July 2018 15:58 -

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### Bill Watrous – Plays The Music of Johnny Mandel: A Time For Love (1993)



1 *Low Life* 5:36 2 *The Shadow Of Your Smile* 5:50 3 *A Time For Love* 4:20 4 *Close Enough For Love* 9:07 5 *Emily* 5:50 6 *Where Do You Start* 3:35 7 *The Shining Sea* 5:55 8 *Zoot* 6:20 9 *Not Really The Blues* 3:49 Arranged By – Sammy Nestico (tracks: 3, 5, 6, 8, 9), Shelly Berg (tracks: 1, 2, 4, 7) Art Direction – Jordana Gainsworth Bass – Lou Fischer Bass [Big Band] – Dave Carpenter Drums – Randy Drake Piano – Shelly Berg Saxophone – Bill Liston, Bob Carr, Bruce Eskovitz, Phil Feather, Sal Lozano Trombone – Bob McChesney, Doug Inman, Rich Bullock Trombone, Leader – Bill Watrous Trumpet – Dennis Farias, Ron Stout, Wayne Bergerom

Bill Watrous has long had one of the prettiest tones of any trombonist, especially in his impressive upper register. It is Watrous' beautiful sound that is emphasized during the nine Johnny Mandel compositions that comprise this CD. Watrous is accompanied by a big band and on some selections a string section but; other than pianist Shelly Berg (who along with Sammy Nestico contributed all of the arrangements), the backup crew is never allowed to rise above its anonymous supportive role. Watrous tries to vary the program a little with the inclusion of some earlier (and hotter) Mandel pieces such as the swinging "Low Life" and "Not Really the Blues" but otherwise this is a ballad showcase, highlighted by "Emily" and "The Shadow of Your Smile." ---Scott Yanow, AllMusic Review

Bill Watrous, a jazz trombonist who came up in the 1960s just as jazz was fading and the trombone was transitioning into studio orchestras and funk-soul groups such as the Jazz Crusaders and Kool and the Gang, died on July 2, 2018. He was 79.

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Much of Watrous's recorded work was in big bands and studio orchestras, though he occasionally recorded in ensembles. But his finest work was on ballads. His singing trombone style on slow tunes was achingly melodic and glossy smooth, a pristine sound matched or topped only by a handful of other players in the '60s and beyond such as Urbie Green and Carl Fontana. As Watrous played a ballad, one could hear his soul pressing through the mouthpiece, making it impossible to ignore the beauty of his tone and articulation. It's fair to say he was woefully under-recorded as a ballad player at a time when the trombone was treated as an archaic acoustic instrument in a psychedelic electronic age. In retrospect, failing to record Watrous sufficiently on ballads was a terrible mistake by labels and producers and a shame. One can only imagine what tribute albums to Henry Mancini, Burt Bacharach and Nat King Cole might have sounded like.

Four of my favorite albums by Watrous that showcased his sterling ballad work are In Love Again (1967), Bill Watrous & Carl Fontana (1984), Bone-ified (1991) and A Time for Love (1993). Here are selections... ---Marc Myers, jazzwax.com

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