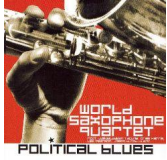


World Saxophone Quartet - Political Blues (2006)

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World Saxophone Quartet - Political Blues (2006)



1. *Political Blues* 2. *Hal's Blues* 3. *Mannish Boy* 4. *Let's Have Some Fun* 5. *Amazin' Disgrace*
6. *Bluocracy Pt. I* 7. *Bluocracy Pt. II* 8. *Bluocracy Pt. III* 9. *Blue Diamond* 10. *Harlem* 11. *Spy On Me Blues*.
Carolyn Amba Hawthorne - Vocals Craig Harris - Vocals, Trombone, Didgeridoo
David Murray - Tenor Saxophone [Tenor Sax], Bass Clarinet Oliver Lake - Sax (Alto), Sax (Soprano), Vocals
Jeremy Pelt - Trumpet Lee Pearson - Drums Hervé Samb - Guitar Jaleel Shaw - Sax (Alto), Sax (Soprano)
Jamaaladeen Tacuma - Bass (Electric), Composer, Producer James Blood Ulmer - Guitar, Vocals
Bruce Williams - Sax (Alto), Sax (Soprano)

World Saxophone Quartet has built a large, impressive and diverse catalog that ranges from the extreme to the relatively accessible. *Political Blues* falls into the relatively accessible category, but for WSQ's 2006 lineup (Oliver Lake on alto and soprano sax, Bruce Williams on alto and soprano sax, Hamiet Bluiett on baritone sax and David Murray on tenor sax and bass clarinet), relatively accessible doesn't mean unchallenging. In fact, the songs that have lyrics pack a strong sociopolitical punch. The title track (which features Murray on lead vocals) expresses the group's disdain for the administration of President George W. Bush, and "Spy on Me Blues" (with Lake on vocals) is a biting yet humorous commentary on Bush's embarrassing performance during the Hurricane Katrina disaster in New Orleans in 2005. But *Political Blues* isn't strictly an album of protest lyrics; many of the tracks are instrumentals, including Lake's funky "Let's Have Some Fun," Murray's somewhat Ellingtonian "Hal's Blues" and Craig Harris' dusky "Harlem." While some WSQ recordings have favored a saxophone-only policy -- no bass, no drums, no guitar, no brass instruments -- this January 2006 session features several non-sax playing guests. Among them: trombonist Harris, electric bassist Jamaaladeen Tacuma, drummer Lee Pearson, trumpeter Jeremy Pelt and guitarist James Blood Ulmer (who is featured as a singer on a spirited performance of Muddy Waters' "Mannish Boy"). *Political Blues'* mixture of jazz, blues and funk is mildly avant-garde, but it isn't radically avant-garde -- and those who have admired WSQ's spirit of adventure will be happy to know that the saxophonists are still taking chances even at their most accessible. ---Alex Henderson, AllMusic Review

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