

All About Jazz

January 2007 Vol. 4 No. 12

CJS Quintet, *Let's Play!*

ConceptSound Music

by Eddie Becton

The CJS Quintet's latest release, *Let's Play!*, from its first note, zooms right out of the block. The title indicates the band is ready to play and indeed they do just that! "Boss Waltz" is indicative of the band's ability to create colorful harmonies, thanks in large part to Wendell Williams' walking bass pattern and Anthony Davis' light touch on drums. But it is the quintet's overall cohesion that makes this track one of the record's best. Another gem is "Subtle Intensity." Opening nostalgically and quickly moving into a gently swaying melody, the congruence of James Smith (trumpet), Al Daniels (piano), and Williams on the intro allows Smith to move into a soulful, passionate solo accompanied by intermittent piano comps by Daniels. Not to be ignored, Chuck Johnson moves into a mellifluous solo that adds to the overall calming effect of the tune. On "Buster's Dance," Daniels dons the keyboard instead of the piano. The effect is akin to the deliciously tempting notes reminiscent of the iconic Chick Corea. Adding to the beauty of this selection is Smith's muted trumpet that conjures up visions of the lyrical acuity of Miles Davis. Overall, *Let's Play!* is an assortment of well-chosen compositions bound to move listeners, creating various moods, tempos, and textures. For listeners who have not acquired this recording during a live performance of the CJS Quintet, perhaps the title of the session will be enough to suggest a purchase. Ready, set...