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SONNY STITT AND

Battle Of



RICHIE COLE

The Saxes

SONNY STITT AND RICHIE COLE

Battle Of The Saxes

AIM 1010 CD

SONNY STITT and RICHIE COLE toured Australia in December 1981. At the time, Sonny Stitt was being hailed by jazz critics everywhere for his miraculous comeback after having, for many years a serious alcohol problem. It is sad that this great return to form of Sonny Stitt was cut short by his untimely death in 1982. He was in fact, a titan of the bebop era and after the death of Charlie Parker in 1955, was regarded by many as the keeper of the flame.

Although Charlie Parker received the acclaim, Sonny Stitt was a truly original sax player. It is said, he may have been a victim of the critics who failed to bestow upon him the critical acclaim he so richly deserved, and perhaps due to frustration he drank - solidly for 30 years. To quote the noted jazz critic Stanly Crouch, "On those bad nights, he had taken on the pathetic buffoonery of those whose personalities are dominated by alcohol. His sets would be short and he would bemoan the deaths of his fellow bebop giants in disconnected monologues that would often culminate in almost tearful sputterings about his faith in Jesus. Shortly thereafter he would be at the bar, stooped over a cognac".

In 1979, Stitt gave up drinking and returned - for such a short period - to the blistering genius of his youth. Critics hailed his playing and fans flocked to hear his music.

Richie Cole, the protege of Phil Woods, in 1981 was the hottest, new alto sax player in the business. His silky hot, free flowing bop style clearly showed the influence of Charlie Parker, and yet his style is unique and instantly recognisable as his own.

In December 1981 these two jazz greats toured together for the first time and made this recording, their only one. For the serious jazz listener, the two distinctly different styles of Sonny Stitt and Richie Cole are apparent. For those of you who are not as familiar with their style, in the true respect that is shown between these musicians, Richie Cole plays the first solo and his is then followed by Sonny Stitt.

BATTLE OF THE SAXES finds these two great jazz sax players in fine form, and although there was a great mutual admiration and respect between them, it is obvious on this recording that each intended to show the other his stuff. The listener is rewarded with the result.

- 1 Laura**
- 2 Serenada Espana**
- 3 I Hear A Rhapsody**
- 4 Lovers Concerto**
- 5 Cherokee**
- 6 Sonny's Blues**
- 7 The Night Has
A Thousand Eyes**

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