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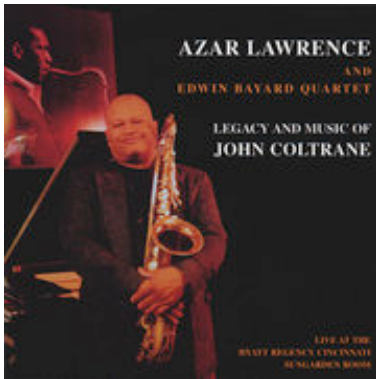
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Azar Lawrence & Edwin Bayard Quartet Legacy and Music of John Coltrane Clarion Jazz

By [Scott Verrastro](#)

Does the world really need another John Coltrane tribute album? It gets exhausting to choose among the multitudes that already exist. However, if even half of them were as vital and powerful as tenor saxophonist Azar Lawrence's Legacy and Music of John Coltrane, there'd be no need for jadedness.

Despite being a marginal name in post-'60s hard-bop and avant-jazz, Lawrence paid his dues in McCoy Tyner's '70s band and appeared on some of the era's seminal albums, including Miles Davis' Dark Magus and Woody Shaw's The Moontrane. He even recorded three fairly well-received albums for Prestige from 1974-76. Lawrence is as good a candidate as any for a Coltrane tribute, and his lower-profile status over the past three decades makes the concept more intriguing.

For this live date, recorded at Cincinnati's Hyatt Regency, Lawrence is augmented by tenor saxophonist Edwin Bayard's Quartet, rounded out by pianist William Mennefield, bassist Dean Hulett and drummer

Mark Lomax II. Choosing two standards (Billy Eckstine's "I Want to Talk About You" and Rodgers and Hammerstein's "My Favorite Things") and two Coltrane originals ("Mr. P.C." and "Impressions"), the ensemble really nails the Coltrane sound of 1963-1965.

Lawrence leads the set with a solo prefacing "I Want to Talk About You," expertly navigating the chord changes with robust tone. Throughout the recording he proves readily schooled in Coltrane's "sheets of sound" approach, avoiding the screeching multiphonics of post-1965 Trane. Undoubtedly the highlight, "Impressions" reveals Bayard as Eric Dolphy to Lawrence's Trane, the two trading off on modal solos with boundless energy, conviction and astonishing sympathy.

The rhythm section of Hulett and Lomax cook throughout, especially the latter, whose forceful drumming would have made Elvin Jones proud. Overall, this is a tribute well worth any Coltrane fan's time.

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