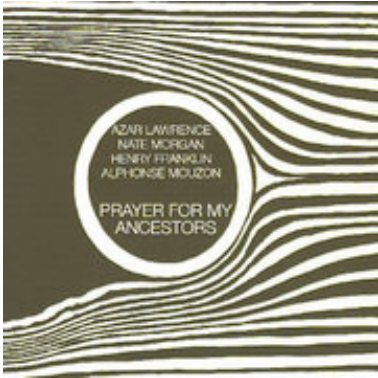


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May 2009

Azar Lawrence Prayer for My Ancestors furthermore

By [Chris Kelsey](#)

With names like Alphonse Mouzon, Roy McCurdy and Azar Lawrence listed on the sleeve, you could be forgiven for expecting this to be either a re-release or a new release of a session recorded in the '70s. Yet the music was recorded recently, and while some might regard the concept as “well-worn,” it could as well be considered “proven.” Lawrence came up in the '70s as a Coltrane disciple, playing with Elvin Jones and McCoy Tyner and making well-received albums of his own. His style hasn't much changed; he's still the same physical, gritty, pentatonically inclined tenor and soprano saxophonist.

He's joined here by a core rhythm section of pianist Nate Morgan, bassist Henry Franklin and his old friend Mouzon; guests include the ex-Cannonball Adderley drummer McCurdy and trumpeter Nolan Shaheed, among others. As Lawrence is beholden to Coltrane, so is Morgan to Tyner, enhancing the overall Coltrane Quartet vibe. Mouzon keeps the energy up and the volume under control. Bassist Franklin contributes lissome basslines and occasional solo pyrotechnics. Is the music derivative? Perhaps. But it's also strong,

honest and emotionally charged. Lawrence made his name with the music he played in the '70s. He should get it back with the music he's playing today.

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