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# The Test

## Dave O'Higgins

Dave O'Higgins came to prominence in the new wave of British players thrown up by the so-called jazz revival of the 1980s. He came to the renewed attention of this magazine for his model bop playing on Frank Holder's 'Ballads, Blues & Bop' album on Mainstem (reviewed October 09). This month he tours in Europe and the UK with American tenor player Eric Alexander. Test by Mark Gilbert.



Malachy Brady

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### STAN GETZ

*Litha*, from *My Foolish Heart*

Getz (ts); Richie Beirach (p); Dave Holland (b); Jack DeJohnette (d). The Famous Ballroom, Baltimore, Maryland, 20 May 1975

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#### Label M 5702

This is *Litha*, the Chick Corea tune. So it's Joe Farrell?

No, it's not the Chick Corea band, though the saxophone player did record with Corea.

Ah – I recognise the sound. Of course, it's Getz. But his tone is much harder on this than in his earlier recordings. That was a good one, because it wrong-footed me. Getz sounds quite edgy but maybe it was just the

way it was recorded. This must have been the same time as 'Captain Marvel' and 'Sweet Rain'. It makes you realise, when you hear Getz playing tunes like that, actually how modern he was. You assume because he plays the songbook, melodically and melliflously, that he wouldn't be interested in playing this sort of material, but when he does he's all over it – fantastic. It's only the inflections and the vibrato that give him away as Stan Getz.

I don't know if he knew this modern, modal-type harmony but I heard he was an ear-player of the highest calibre. I always use him as an example for students of what I call intuitive playing. You have this range

– people who are very studied players and people who are very intuitive and all the shades between. I always think of people like Coltrane and Brecker as the very studied players and people like Getz and Art Pepper as the very intuitive players. I don't think Getz was a reader, for example. I'm not hugely influenced by Getz but I love him.

My background? I went to City University in London, but their practical stuff was done at The Guildhall. So I had classical lessons with Anton Weinberg but they started the Guildhall jazz course while I was at City so I hung out with all those people on the first year at Guildhall, like Robin Aspland, Mornington Lockett and all that lot. I wasn't interested in classical saxophone, though I've since become much more open-minded about it. I was much more opinionated then. I'm a great admirer of classical soprano saxophone playing. The tone adopted on the alto and the tenor in classical is so far removed from the jazz sound that I find that alto, tenor and classical music aren't very natural companions. With soprano playing I think the classical concept is completely the concept. The sound on soprano that I don't like is when people try to give it what they see as a contemporary, raucous edge. There are two good examples, but I won't name names.

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### WARNE MARSH & LEE KONITZ

*April*, *Two Not One*

Marsh (ts); Konitz (as); Ole Kock Hansen (p); Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen (b); Svend Erik Nørregård (d). Montmartre, Copenhagen, 4 December 1975

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#### Storyville 108 8606

What a strange sax sound. I have heard it before though. What a bizarre head it was too. Well, it's *I'll Remember April* but with their head. The bizarre thing is that the first sax sound was so strange that I wasn't even sure if it was two altos or an alto and a tenor because it was all in that upper register.

*If you need a clue, I think Chris Potter and Mark Turner are two players who've adopted some of the tenor player's style.*

Ah, so is it Warne Marsh? I'm not familiar with Warne Marsh at all. Who's the alto player?

*Konitz.*

Obviously they're two players who've been