

FROM ORIGINAL ANALOG MASTER

2^xHD
FUSION

Gentle Ben

Ben Webster
Tete Montoliu Trio





It was Webster who gave the tenor sax the mission of keeping this difficult tradition alive. His style was not limited by eras and was able to insert itself into any context, although in the final fifteen years of his life he was most comfortable as the only wind instrument, accompanied by a basic trio. However, his recordings in quintets (with Thad Jones), sextets (with Benny Carter), septets (with Oliver Nelson) or accompanied by strings, as he was in the famous ballad sessions for the Verve label, are also extraordinary.

Despite being a respected, much-admired musician in his own country, and a point of reference for many of the emerging young performers—even for the most radical tendencies, such as the saxophonist Archie Shepp who still considers him his mentor—Webster left the United States in 1965 to settle in Europe, first in Copenhagen and later in Amsterdam. In both cities, he became a revered figure, and local fans deemed it a privilege to have him living amongst them. In Copenhagen, he used to play with the basic trio in the famous Café Montmartre, with Kenny Drew or Tete Montoliu at the keyboard. His understanding with Montoliu stemmed from some years earlier and the pianist attributed his final preparation as a jazz musician to Webster and Don Byas.

This record was made ten months before the saxophonist's death, during a visit to Tete Montoliu's Barcelona. There he met the pianist's regular trio and from their understanding sprang one of the finest moments recorded in Ben Webster's maturity. The huge amount of recorded material from the same period in Copenhagen and Amsterdam (where there are recordings of a recital he gave a week before his death) could lead one to think that they all have the same lively tone. However, the fact that Tete Montoliu was playing in his home town worked as a balance, and one could almost say that *Gentle Ben* is a shared work, as were Webster's famous sessions with Art Tatum twenty years previously. Both musicians understood each other so well and so deeply that it is hard to accept that these encounters, although they added up to many over the years, were actually more of a coincidence than planned. As far as Tete Montoliu is concerned, this recording is one of the best in his whole career; and whenever he is not fully in the spotlight, he absorbs Webster's projection of energy. Both create common lines that are more viable in friendship than in professional contacts.

Carlos Sampayo (1998)



Recording location: CASINO DE L'ALIANÇA DEL POBLE NOU, BARCELONA. NOVEMBER 28, 1972
Producer: ANTONIO ARMET

2xHD Mastering: RENÉ LAFLAMME
2xHD Executive Producer: ANDRÉ PERRY

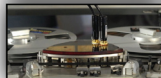
Gentle Ben

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|----|---|-------|
| 1. | BEN' BLUES
(Ben Webster) | 9'05" |
| 2. | THE MAN I LOVE
(George & Ira Gershwin) | 5'38" |
| 3. | MY NEPHEW BENT
(Ben Webster) | 5'26" |
| 4. | HOW LONG HAS THIS BEEN GOING ON
(George & Ira Gershwin) | 8'06" |
| 5. | SWEET GEORGIA BROWN
(Bernie-Pinkard-Casey) | 6'29" |
| 6. | DON'T BLAME ME
(Fields-Mchugh) | 8'03" |
| 7. | DID YOU CALL
(Ben Webster) | 8'43" |
| 8. | BARCELONA SHOUT
(Ben Webster) | 4'41" |

BEN WEBSTER, sax
TETE MONTOLIU, piano
PEER WYBORIS, drums
ERIC PETER, bass



THE 2xHD FUSION MASTERING SYSTEM



In the constant evolution of its proprietary mastering process, 2xHD has progressed to a new phase called 2xHD FUSION, integrating the finest analog, with state-of-the-art digital technology.

The mastering chain consists of a selection of high-end vacuum tube equipment. For the recordings on this album, the original ¼" 15 ips CCIR master tapes were played on a Nagra-T tape recorder, modified with high-end tube playback electronics, wired with OCC silver cable from the playback head direct to a Nick Doshi tube head preamplifier. The Nagra T, with its four direct drive motors, two pinch rollers and a tape tension head, has one of the best transports ever made. A custom-built carbon fiber head block and a head damping electronic system permit 2xHD FUSION to obtain a better resolution and 3D imaging.

The resulting signal is then transferred into high resolution formats by recording it in DSD 11.2 MHz using a Merging Technologies' Horus A to D converter. All analog and digital cables that are used are state of the art. The 2xHD FUSION mastering system is powered by a super capacitor power supply, using a new technology that lowers the digital noise found in the lowest level of the spectrum. A vacuum tube NAGRA HDdac (DSD) is used as a reference digital playback converter in order to A and B with the original analog master tape, permitting the fusion of the warmth of analog with the refinement of digital.

2xHD was created by producer/studio owner André Perry and audiophile sound engineer René Laflamme.

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