



**DVD: Jazz Shots from the East Coast Vol. 3 (2006)**

**Review Rating:** Standard

**Label/Studio:** EFORFilms / MVD (Music Video Distributors)

**Catalog #:** DVD-2869054

**Region:** 0 (NTSC)

**Released:** June 20, 2006

**Genre:** Jazz Performances / Jazz Concerts

**Synopsis:** Anthology of live and filmed jazz performances of famous east coast musicians.

**Directed by:** none credited

**Screenplay by:** none credited

**Music by:** various



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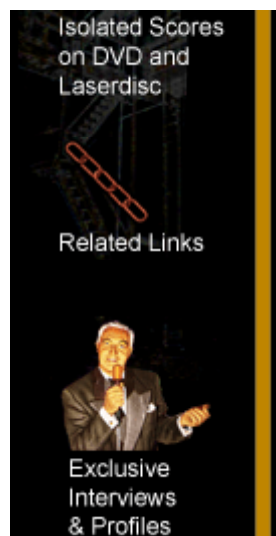


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**Produced by:** none credited

**Cast:** John Coltrane, Wynton Marsalis, Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers, Dizzy Gillespie with Lalo Schiffrin, Thad Jones, Jimmy Smith Trio, Woody Herman Big Band, Sonny Rollins Quartet with Jim Hall, Miles Davis & the Gil Evans Orchestra, Duke Ellington, and Pony Poindexter.

**Film Length:** 95 mins

**Process/Ratio:** 1.33:1

**Black & White / Colour**

**Anamorphic DVD:** No

**Languages:** English Mono

**Subtitles:**

**Special Features :**

(none)

**Comments :**

Volume 3 in the series presents two rare TV appearances by John Coltrane from the **Jazz Casual** [JC] series from 1964, with Trane, bassist Jimmy Garrison, drummer Elvin Jones, and pianist McCoy Tyner performing the moody "Alabama," and the spiraling "Afro Blue."

It's amazing how few of Trane's performances exist on film and videotape, and while his music continues to circulate on CD, live performances were few and far between for the legendary tenor sax player - a sign that live music during the sixties was largely controlled by the popular variety shows aimed at broad and aging audiences, or weekly shows featuring pop bands for the youth market.

Like PBS' JC series, the broadcaster is still one of the few outlets where live jazz shows up on TV, and it's rather tragic that vintage shows and shorts remain largely unavailable, or appear as fleeting DVDs and import releases.

Trane on TV isn't all that dramatic, however, as the master musician's concentration is so sharp that his overall comportment is unemotional, and physically immobile. What the live material shows is a relationship of precision within the quartet; the musicians don't need to look up or check out the other's playing because, like the chords and harmonics within their music, the group is a well-oiled machine whose individual styles deliberately blend into one distinctive sound. Trane may be the leader, but his solos don't outshine nor belittle the work of the others.

The next clip is a young Wynton Marsalis with Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers playing a low-key version of "My Ship." Videotaped most likely during the eighties, the live concert in a small club is also excerpted on Volume 2 of the East Coast series, and while Marsalis' streaming improv is a bit rough, the extract shows him as a clear-cut emerging talent. His tone is smooth and steady, and the group's pianist also gets a small moment of business in what's essentially Marsalis' show piece for the concert.

Also from the JC archives is the Dizzy Gillespie Quintet playing "Blues After Dark" and "Lorraine," with a young Lalo Schiffrin on piano. Taped in 1961, the sets are typically light, and the first song features some breezy work from the flautist. The two

songs also capture Schifrin's important role in the band as performer and composer while he was simultaneously learning the craft of film scoring. The quintet's rendition of Gillespie's own "Lorraine" has a nice, steady groove, with subtle bass in the background, and trumpet and flute trading parts before a brisk rhythmic shift from the drums, and the song's familiar mid-section of long improv and grooving bass.

Likely from a 1968 JC appearance is the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Orchestra performing "St. Louis Blues." Sharing the harmonic design of Gil Evans and the group's own bursts of drum-backed solos, it's a sweet segment that also shows Thad Jones' amusing, idiosyncratic conducting style.

From the **Jazz Scene USA** (JSU) show there's the Jimmy Smith Trio performing "The Champ" and Elmer Bernstein's popular theme from **Walk on the Wild Side**. The first song is told in gorgeous high-contrast, extreme close-ups of the musicians at work - Smith's hands gliding from one chord to the next, the edge of a high-hat in motion, the drummer's foot and pedal strikes - with Smith's intensity captured in a series of shots that appear time-compressed, but are representative of the organist's intensity and dexterity in real time.

Bernstein's theme gets a leisurely rendition, with solo work shared between organ and guitar. The slow tempo forms a nice contrast to the musicians' heavy accent on specific phrases, and after a short intro that basically goes through the complete theme, it's all groovy improvs, enhanced by multiple superimpositions of the musicians. Smith's hand repeats a pair of notes in a steady mechanical rhythm at one point, and soon after he uses his chin to hold a note while noodling with his right hand. Really fun stuff.

Woody Herman's Big Band perform "Just Squeeze Me" and "After You're Gone" (extracted from a mid-sixties show) and the sets have above-average sound for the vintage extracts that sometimes lack a needed dynamic range. Herman's solo in the first song is sharp and luxurious, with nice contributions from the trombone and trumpet. It's a classic big band sound, with Herman contributing minor material on clarinet.

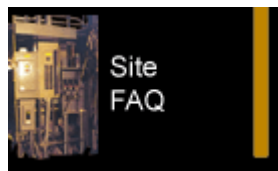
The Sonny Rollins Quartet performs "God Bless the Child" from their JC appearance, and shows Rollins in his prime, performing long, elegant tones on his tenor sax, with gentle guitar work from Jim Hall. It's a beautiful contrast of sounds, with brushes on drums adding a soothing texture to the gentle song.

Vintage clips from Miles Davis and Gil Evans from their **Sound of Jazz** appearance has the trumpet player and orchestra performing "The Duke," "Blues for Pablo," and "New Rumba." The largesse of the orchestra is revealed in long tracking shots, with Miles as the centerpiece in shots from afar, over a musician's shoulder, or in close-up. It's a rare glimpse at the musicians performing the sounds that radically altered the way jazz could be orchestrated and performed, and features music that defined a key phase in Miles' career after being heavily involved in Bebop.

The DVD closes with two bonus archival shorts: Duke Ellington's orchestra performing "Newport Stomp," and Pony Poindexter performing "Another Get Together." The former is very odd short and seems to be an archival extract from a newsreel, possibly from the fifties, as most of the footage is a long, wide shot from the stage side, with a few brief close-ups of a mature Ellington at the piano, and a final shot of the audience.

Alto saxophonist Pony Poindexter's appearance seems to be from a 1963 JC appearance, and has his quartet performing the bouncy "Another Get Together" with intricate drum work from Jimmy Smith.

Available separately, this excellent title is part of a new four-part wave that includes **Jazz Shots from the East Coast Volume 2** & **Volume 3**, and **Jazz Shots from the West Coast Volume 2** & **Volume 3**. **East Coast Volume 1** and **West Coast Volume 1** are also available.



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