



'Complete Studio Recordings,' Clifford Brown/Sonny Rollins/Max Roach Quintet (Essential Jazz Classics, 4 stars)

'Saxophone Colossus,' Sonny Rollins (Essential Jazz Classics, 4 stars)

The first of these June 2 discs spotlighting the "100 Best Jazz Albums of All Time" was recorded in 1956 by trumpeter Clifford Brown, tenor saxophonist Sonny Rollins, drummer Max Roach, bassist George Morrow and pianist/arranger Richie Powell. These tracks made up two albums (Clifford Brown and Max Roach at Basin St. and Sonny Rollins Plus 4) comprising the entire recorded output of this fantastic group, due to the car accident 6/26/56 that took the life of Brown, Powell and Powell's wife.

The music is superb, with galloping tempos, melodic mastery, and superb soloing. Highlights include Roach's inventive drumming, wonderful interplay between trumpet, sax and piano, the jaunty opener "Gertrude's Bounce," and a playful version of "Love is a Many Splendored Thing."

The second CD spotlights Sonny Rollins' saxophone wizardry; and was recorded early June 1956. A second album, Work Time, recorded in 1955, is also included. Max Roach drums on both albums, with pianist Tommy Flanagan/bassist Doug Watkins on the Colossus tracks; and pianist Ray Bryant/bassist George Morrow on the Work Time tunes.

Highlights include the calypso-flavored opener, "Saint Thomas," Rollins' homage to Chicago, "Strode Rode," and the minor-key "Blue 7," which features impressive solos from everyone, proving that Rollins' sax playing is a marvel while his group doesn't lag behind.

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