

Yellowjackets

New Morning: The Paris Concert

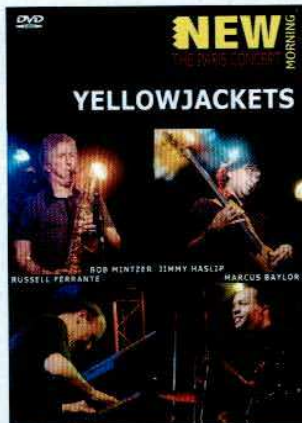
HEADS UP DVD 7167

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One of the prevailing arguments jazz has over MTV-era pop is that because there is so much musical sophistication and improvisational wonderment, it doesn't need glitzy production to get its artistic message or merit across. In turn, a commercial DVD of a contemporary jazz band certainly should deliver something that hooks you in visually and retains your attention.

For all the intimate multi-camera work that provides a bird's-eye view of Marcus Baylor's intricate drum patterns or keyboardist Russell Ferrante's deliberate fingering, for all of the richness of the color and the framing of the stage and audience, and for all of the top-notch fusion that the Yellowjackets play—this DVD is a bore.

It's certainly no fault of the band. The Yellowjackets are simply doing their thing, delivering poignant post-Weather Report fusion that reconciles funk, South African jazz, bebop and electric fusion. The empathy the group displays, despite the various lineups,



shows an accord that's built on trust and longstanding musical communication. The video production certainly has its charms: the constant glee in Ferrante's smile, the strong, silent-type demeanor of bassist Jimmy Haslip, Baylor's face cringing during some of his heated funk patterns.

But that's hardly enough to keep viewers glued to the screen. None of the members, for better or worse, hams it up like Jaco Pastorius did during Weather Report's halcyon years, and none of the musicians engages in any hilarious banter with the audience members. From a visual standpoint, only diehard fans or music students looking to watch technique from exceptional musicians will find this remotely engaging. And in this multi-tasking, ADD world, even they might find themselves becoming fidgety about 15 minutes into it.

—John Murph

New Morning: The Paris Concert: Aha; Capetown; Bop Boy; Prayer For Peace; Cross Current; Dewey; With These Hands; Freedomland; Even Song; Downtown; Healing Waters; Evening News. (98:00)

Personnel: Russell Ferrante, piano and keyboards; Marcus Baylor, drums; Jimmy Haslip, bass; Bob Mintzer, tenor saxophone and EWI.

Ordering info: headsup.com