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Solos: The Jazz Sessions - Andrew Hill

Score: **85%**
Rating: **Not Rated**
Publisher: **MVD Entertainment Group**
Region: **A**
Media: **DVD/1**
Running Time: **50 Mins.**
Genre: **Live Performance/TV Series/Musical**
Audio: **English Stereo Sound**

Features:

- Songs:
- East 19th Street
 - Bent Forward
 - Unsmooth
 - Tough Love
- Bonus: Preview of **Solos: The Jazz Sessions** - Gonzalo Rubalcaba

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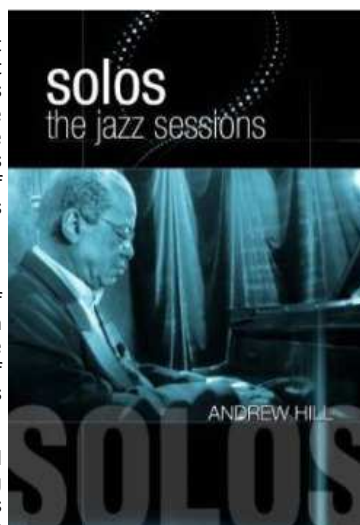
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The late Andrew Hill is featured here on **Solos: The Jazz Sessions** in a format that most pianists would love to inhabit. For Hill, it showcased a side of him that fans have always known, but which may slip past newcomers. The rich performances Hill turned in, with the incredible Berkeley Church in Toronto as his backdrop, were all about slipping in and out of conventionality. The opportunity to hear this much Andrew Hill in isolation is certainly a special event for fans of progressive jazz piano. It's as if we are sitting around the stage after a show, with Hill playing a relaxed collection of songs he wants to play for himself. The reflection and calm in this session are awesome, but the way in which Hill stretches the boundaries of tonality, resolution, and formal structure in his music is the hidden treasure.



Muscular wasn't an adjective that one associated with Hill, although the tonal quality of his playing did push the envelope frequently. To a less discerning ear, he played sweet music on this DVD, from the often lilting melody of *Unsmooth*, to the jumping swing of *Bent Forward*, to the mix of searching ballads *East 19th Street* and *Tough Love*. The latter two are what you could almost imagine as poignant love songs, set against some tragic backdrop in a film, but they also often verge on discordant, are punctuated by heavy strikes with the left-hand, and urgent chorded statements. Hill defied easy categorization, especially when you consider that the easiest label for him was that of free jazz or avant-garde music. The problem with these labels is that Hill clearly came from something traditional. Western classical, blues, sacred music, and folk songs are influences that come across while listening to these selections, and Hill also influenced and was influenced by the open chord voicings that more well-known players like McCoy Tyner made such a central part of their playing style in the '60s.


The production of **Solos: The Jazz Sessions - Andrew Hill** is very high quality, with only a few segments that took Hill away from the piano for brief interviews. He came across as quite otherworldly in these bits, somewhat disconnected and incomprehensible at times. The vision he had for his music wasn't something that made for easy explanation, and perhaps the underlying sentiment Hill had at the time was, "Let me get back to my piano." There's a lot to watch when a pianist is at work, and the camera angles and edits are handled here with lots of skill. **Solos: The Jazz Sessions** is a wonderful premise, and this session is special for featuring a player we no longer have the ability to see live. Hill was found here playing some incredible music, and the visual treatment lets us get into his technical style as well as the charged atmosphere he created around him with his playing. For someone


considered a staple of free jazz, it may be surprising for viewers to find so little that feels overtly experimental. This was Hill's talent, and **Solos: The Jazz Sessions** caught him exercising that talent massively.

-Fridtjof, GameVortex Communications AKA Matt Paddock

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Solos Jazz Online
Andrew Hill on Wikipedia

 Solos: The Jazz Sessions -
Lee Konitz

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