



C R E A T I N G J A Z Z L E G A C I E S

Previously Unreleased Live Concert By Legendary Pianist Gene Harris Debuts From Newly Formed Resonance Records As The First Release of Their Heirloom Series, March 24

The Heirloom Series of Resonance Records makes an auspicious debut with *Gene Harris: The Quartet Live in London*, an outstanding and unexpected addition to the late pianist's catalog of buoyant, hard-swinging discs.

Based on previously unreleased tapes provided by his widow Janie Harris, *Live in London* is also the only available recording of Harris in action with his British quartet. This group performed together exclusively in the U.K., where hometown audience support and remarkable musicianship elevated their performances to match standards set by Harris's previous work. Most of these tunes have never been recorded by Harris before and none have been previously recorded in quartet ensemble.

Live in London was captured for posterity in 1996, more than three decades into a career whose highlights included leading his own groups as well as a long run with bassist Ray Brown's trio. Born in Benton Harbor, Michigan, Harris formed The Three Sounds soon after leaving the military and they became one of the most popular acts on the scene at the time. In addition to their own popularity they were called on to back artists such as Nat Adderley, Anita O'Day, Ernestine Anderson and Stanley Turrentine. In the mid-70s, Harris went into semi-retirement only to return at Brown's behest in 1983 to become a first-call accompanist for Milt Jackson and Brown. Harris's soulful ballads and bluesy style was heard on the many trio, small group and big band recordings he recorded as a leader throughout the late 80s and the decade that followed. Harris passed on January 16, 2000 awaiting a kidney transplant.

Recorded during one night at the celebrated Pizza Express Jazz Club, the six tracks on *Live in London* capture Harris at his peak. During a break between gigs in the States, Harris booked a European tour, with British promoter Robert Masters trusted to put his band together from the best local talent.

The results exceeded expectations: As documented on *Live in London*, Harris clicked instantly with guitarist Jim Mullen (whose credits include Brian Auger, Vinegar Joe and Kokomo), bassist Andrew Cleyndert (Ray Bryant, Art Farmer, Lee Konitz, Kenny Wheeler) and drummer Martin Drew (Herb Ellis, Ella Fitzgerald, Joe Pass and Oscar Peterson). From the bracing solo piano intro and brisk band entrance on "There Is No Greater Love" to the exuberant strut of the "Blues Closer," the home team plays as if its members had grown up with Harris back in Michigan: The electricity between them is palpable, each current inspiring one to lock harder onto the groove or dig deeper into the feel and feed that energy back to its sender for more.

"It was stunning from the first note to the last and every note in between," writes Janie Harris in the liner copy for *Live in London*. "Gene worked his magic, the guys recognized that magic ... and the Quartet played as one finely tuned instrument. By the end of the night, the audience was going nuts as were we."

"I was very excited when I heard these tapes," adds George Klabin, president and founder of Resonance Records. "Gene was playing so well and the music was great, but what convinced me to make this our first Heirloom release was that the sound was marvelous. You very rarely hear a live recording that's as pristine, especially with music as superb, as this."

Klabin is a music industry veteran, with a history that includes recording Bill Evans, Keith Jarrett and other luminaries while still a student at Columbia University, overseeing the recording of jazz, R&B and pop projects at his Sound Ideas Studios in Manhattan, and most recently launching the Rising Jazz Stars

Foundation, whose goal is to offer talented but little-known performers wider exposure through live events and CDs.

Resonance Records is the imprint on which these albums will be released. At the same time, the Heirloom series at Resonance will release new or previously unheard recordings by artists whose reputations are already well established. *Gene Harris: The Quartet Live in London* is the first release in this Heirloom series.

Gene Harris: The Quartet Live in London – Resonance/Heirloom HCD 2001
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For further information on this and other Resonance Records releases, visit **ResonanceRecords.org**
Resonance Records is a program of the Rising Jazz Stars Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation

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