

Geoffrey Keezer
Sublime—Honoring The Music Of Hank Jones ▶

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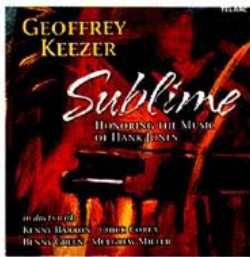
★★★★

Cyrus Chestnut
You Are My Sunshine

WARNER BROS. JAZZ 48445

★★★★

Pianist Hank Jones once said, "I am the sum total of everything that I have experienced



musically." If that's the case, Jones is the result of a complex equation. His earliest initiation came as Art Tatum's young protégé, while later serving as a sideman for the likes of John Coltrane, Miles Davis, Charlie Parker, Lester Young and Ella Fitzgerald. Currently still going

strong at almost 85, the summation of Jones' career-long contributions continues to grow exponentially.

Similarly, Geoffrey Keezer has often

found himself in the company of giants, pulling stints as the last pianist to play in both Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers and bassist Ray Brown's trio. With *Sublime*, Keezer tackles Jones' often-overlooked compositional catalog by fittingly joining forces with a quartet of fellow pianists that includes Kenny Barron, Chick Corea, Benny Green and Mulgrew Miller.

Sublime is at once thoroughly intimate and disarmingly playful. Keezer's grasp of the material is beyond reproach, nimbly dancing from one tune to the next with ease. Meanwhile the dialogue between pianists takes centerstage as cuts like "Passing Time" with Barron and the appropriately titled "Intimidation" with Corea illustrate the interplay and exchange of ideas at its best. Likewise, Keezer's duets with Green on "Things Are So Pretty In The Spring" and Miller on "Lullaby" reveal a mature sense of subtlety that allow the full beauty of Jones' works to shine for themselves.

While Keezer pays homage to Jones' catalog, fellow pianist Cyrus Chestnut quietly offers a subtle and subconscious nod to Jones' indelible style. While the heart of Jones' approach to the keys resides in his early embrace of the burgeoning bebop sound, his earliest entry point tracks back to the stride-style approach of such influences as Fats Waller, Teddy Wilson and Earl Hines. With *You Are My Sunshine*, Chestnut taps into this legacy by drawing together a strong mixture of blues, gospel and jazz into a potent brew, one that often finds flashes of Chestnut's funk and classical sensibilities shining through. While the more gospel-flavored numbers like "Precious Lord," "God Has Smiled On Me" and the title track bear a decidedly non-traditional approach, they still resonate with a deeply spiritual demeanor. Chestnut's contribution of five evocative originals—including his rollicking swinger "Flipper"—proves that intentionally or not, he has positioned himself to be a worthy heir apparent to Jones' musical mantle.

—John Kreicbergs

Sublime—Honoring The Music Of Hank Jones: Angel Face; Hank's Blues; Passing Time; Time Warp; Lullaby; Things Are So Pretty In The Spring; Sublime; Favors; Alpha; Intimidation. (58:16)

Personnel: Geoffrey Keezer, piano; with Kenny Barron (3,8), Chick Corea (4,10), Benny Green (2,6), Mulgrew Miller (5,9), piano.

Ordering Info: www.telarc.com

You Are My Sunshine: God Smiled On Me; It's All Right With Me; For The Saints; Precious Lord; You Are My Sunshine; Errolling; Total Praise; Light Hearted Intelligence; Sweet Hour Of Prayer; Hope Song; Flipper; What A Fellowship; Pass Me Not O Gentle Savior. (70:26)

Personnel: Cyrus Chestnut, piano; Michael Hawkins, bass; Neal Smith, drums.

Ordering Info: www.wbjazz.com

