

ART PEPPER

NEW YORK ALBUM

ORIGINALLY PRODUCED BY:

John Snyder and Laurie Pepper

REISSUE PRODUCED BY:

John Koenig

REISSUE EXECUTIVE

PRODUCER:

Chad Kassem

REMIXED BY:

Rik Pekkonen & John Koenig

COVER PHOTO:

Roger Marshutz

LAYOUT AND DESIGN:

Elaine Koenig / Liz Knaus

Special thanks, Laurie Pepper

*Recorded 2-23-79 at Sound Ideas, NYC
excluding LOVER MAN, recorded May 26, 1979, at Kendum Recorders, Burbank, CA*

ART PEPPER

alto saxophone

AL FOSTER

drums

HANK JONES

piano

RON CARTER

bass

When you're on probation you're not supposed to leave town. Art Pepper was on probation for most of his working life. His deserved early celebrity and his ever growing artistry created an ongoing demand for his music, so he did continue to record in Los Angeles over the years as he cycled in and out of state and county prisons as a result of arrests for his drug use. And he made magnificent recordings with LA musicians and with others who just happened to be visiting on tour.

In 1977, at the age of 52, Art embarked on what was to be his last and best comeback, and, no

longer hindered by a California Department of Corrections "tail," he could travel if he wanted to. He wasn't sure he did want to or, more significantly, if anyone anywhere cared whether he did. John Snyder not only cared, he made it happen, and with John as his "manager," Art finally recorded for the first time outside Los Angeles and toured for the first time with his own band.

In 1977 John was the creative director at Horizon Records - which was not Art's label. Nevertheless, because he was an Art Pepper fan and had good connections in the jazz music business, John took

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it upon himself to promote Art's first ever East Coast tour. Two years later, when John started his own record company, "Artists House," he asked Art to make one LP for it. Art was by that time signed to the Galaxy/Fantasy label. One outside album was all that would be permitted him by contract. For that single album John booked a couple of days in an LA studio with some musicians Art knew and liked. And then, since Art was planning to go to New York anyway, to promote his autobiography, John scheduled a couple of days in a New York studio with some famous local musicians. Just for good measure.

Rock and pop albums take months or years to make and they're often recorded at sessions all over the world with many different sidemen. The kind of album Art and other jazz artists of his generation made usually required only a few familiar sidemen and a few hours. A jazz album of that kind was the product of the moment of improvisation. It relied on what the leader and his accomplices made of that moment.

So John knew he could make a great record in less than a day. I think he recorded more music than he needed because he could. And he did delight in the process. And he also wanted to see what would happen if he just threw Art into a studio with some star players he'd never worked with.

John knew that had succeeded wonderfully before. In 1954, Art had been surprised out of a notoriously protracted nod to lead a session with a Miles Davis rhythm section which was visiting L.A., and ART PEPPER MEETS THE RHYTHM SECTION is probably still his most popular album. In 1957 he made "Gettin' Together" with a different Davis rhythm section that was passing through. (Actually the tradition is contin-

ued somewhat at this session; Al Foster was Davis's drummer for a while.)

Well, the results of John's experiment are here, and it was a great idea if only because Art invariably responded with such energy to a challenge. Gary Giddens has said that Art was always at his best when he had something to prove. He had something to prove at this date. This was a band—just like Miles's bands—Art felt compelled to impress. So he threw one of his newest and most difficult charts at them, "My Friend John," and roared through that and everything else with spirit and vigor.

During this period and until the end of his life Art usually showed more emotion in his playing than he had earlier in his career; he gave free rein to overt passion, and usually assembled bands which complemented that freedom. This album is a bit of an anomaly in that his music hews closer to what some people call, nostalgically, "the old Art Pepper." For this session Art brought out the formidable bebopper he always was. This is brisk, bright, pure jazz, and Art Pepper is in a good mood; he's in a fighting mood.

Laurie Pepper, 1996



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