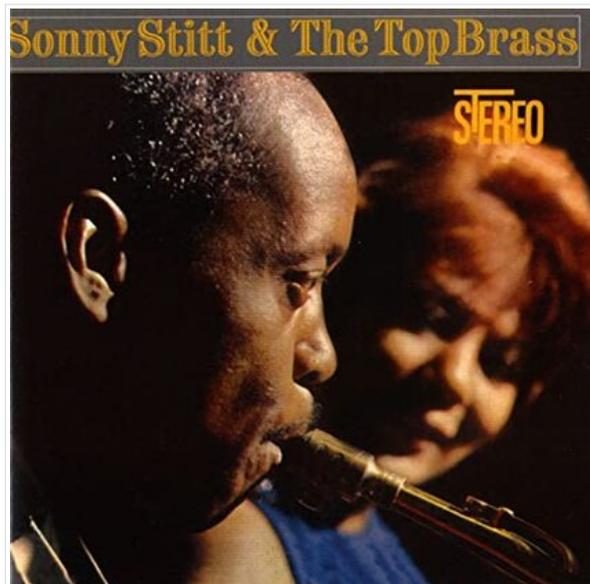




Search

[HOME](#)[ALBUM REVIEWS](#)[INTERVIEWS](#)[MUSICIAN'S PLAYLIST](#)[ARTICLES & FEATURES](#)[CONTACT US](#)[LINKS](#)[UK VENUES](#)[Return to Index](#)**SONNY STITT - Sonny Stitt & The Top Brass**

**Atlantic 1395 made & distributed by
www.speakerscornerrecords.com**

*Sonny Stitt (as); Blue Mitchell, Dick Vance, Reunald Jones (t); Willie Ruff (frh); Matthew Gee, Jimmy Cleveland (tb); Duke Jordan (p); Perri Lee (org); Joe Benjamin (b); Frank Brown, Philly Joe Jones (d)
 Recorded NYC 1963*

Stitt was known as the Lone Wolf because for almost all his career he worked as a soloist picking up rhythm sections wherever he went. He never had a regular job in a combo or had his own group. It suited his style as a prolific soloist and gave him all the blowing room he needed. This ten- piece little big band was a departure with arrangements by Tadd Dameron and Jimmy Mundy. He had only done this once before when he recorded for Roost in 1955 with a nine piece- band playing arrangements by Quincy Jones. That disc was good but underrated by critics at the time although this present session is more comprehensive overall and features solos by Blue Mitchell, the two trombonists, Lee on organ and Duke Jordan's piano. Philly Joe Jones delivers his crisp, swinging beat on five of the nine tracks.

Souls Valley is a shouting, gospel style track with Stitt charging through with remarkable ease and fashioning the kind of complex, inventive alto solos he was so good at. And so, he continues throughout with a spectacular solo on Coquette where his intricate lines could even challenge Charlie Parker's invention. Best of all though is his reflective blowing the blues on Dameron's arrangement of Sea, Sea Rider although I didn't think it was spelled with an 'a'. Another highlight here is the trombone duet between Cleveland and Gee, one smooth and dark, the other gruff and growling. Stitt contributes two attractive originals to the proceedings and there is a tasty if unfamiliar piece by Dameron called The Four Ninety.

If you are familiar with the many Stitt with rhythm records and fancy trying something with a bit more depth and content, try this charging little big band for size. First class sound and mastering from Speakers Corner.

Reviewed by Derek Ansell

ECM 50 TOUCHSTONES

ECM celebrates 50 years of music production with the Touchstones series of re-issues