

JAZZ JOURNAL

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JED LEVY

GOOD PEOPLE

Just In Time; Red Lipstick; Good People (21.18) — The Zealots; Daydream; Jenkuja (21.56)

Jed Levy (ts); Peter Leitch (g); Peter Madsen (p); Rufus Reid (b); Billy Hart (d). Englewood Cliffs, NJ, May 23/24, 1987.

(Reservoir RSR 105)

This is Levy's first outing as leader and it's a record date that has long been overdue on this hearing. He has spent some eight years honing his axe with leading jazz luminaries including membership of Jaki Byard's Apollo Stompers. Levy's tone is lucid, and positively devoid of any histrionics so prevalent in many of his contemporaries, and his choice of material, two standards and four originals, is ideally suited to the controlled emotion of his playing.

A brisk, but not stampeded *Just In Time* is a good opener to highlight the man's tight succinct phrasing. He leaps from the theme with a flurry of intelligent notes fluently delivered and accented by his burnished tone. It's his ultra smooth but firm technique that makes this album so good. The title track, *Good People*, a Levy original, is an interesting structure allowing Leitch, who takes the first break, room to explore with some inventive lines before Levy casually drifts in picking up the thread and making some compressed, almost smug, statements. Madsen sums up with his loose-fingered keyboard work which he uses to good effect throughout the session.

This track is typical of Levy's compositional qualities and his ability to create interesting themes to improvise on. *Jenkuja* closes the album; a relaxed purposeful ramble featuring casual subdued guitar and a brooding but stimulating tenor solo from the main man, but not before Madsen takes his most effusive break on the album. There is tight sympathetic support by Reid and Hart who obviously felt much empathy for the music as evidenced in their playing.

Altogether an exciting debut from a player whose modern approach is governed by the need to make every note a positive statement.

David Lands

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