

PRESS RELEASE



ODEAN POPE WITH BILLY HART & LEE SMITH ODEAN'S 3

IOR CD 77112-2
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1. Phrygian A' Trois (6:18)
2. Fresh Breeze (7:31)
- 3 The Garden Of Happiness (8:25)
4. Good Question Two (8:41)
5. Blues It (12:28)

6. Blues For Eight (8:04)
7. Almost Like Pt. One (8:14)
8. 12th Night (8:14)
9. You And Me: (4:03)

Odean Pope (ts)
Lee Smith (b)
Billy Hart (dr)

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Odean Pope: „Three“

It has become fashionable to think of modern jazz as something that is gradually becoming antiquated. Well, here is a living proof to the contrary in human form, named Odean Pope, tenor saxophonist, bursting with creativity at the age of 73. Most recently, the Philadelphia icon impressed with an all-star band on the In & Out album, „Odean's List“. Two years later, he is committed to demonstrating his art in a concentrated trio setting: „Three“ comes as a multi-faceted work that reveals a fresh, almost youthful touch.

Odean Pope's career touched many striking points of jazz history: In Philadelphia, he grew up in the jazz, gospel and R&B environment of the fifties. When John Coltrane moved to New York, he chose the young tenor player to be his successor in Jimmy Smith's group. Searching for his own characteristic sound, Pope studied with the leader of the Philadelphia Orchestra's woodwind section, Ron Rubin, and received his degree in orchestration, modern harmony, African, bebop and arranging at the Paris Conservatory for Music. Later he was instructed by Ray Bryant, was influenced by the eccentric pianist, Hasaan Ibn Ali and, beginning in 1979, played for more than two decades in Max Roach's quartet.

Combining all these impulses, Pope developed his own language, ranging from gospel to classical sounds and



began to experiment with his influences in the band Katalyst. Circular breathing and multiphonics enriched his playing, the latter becoming a special trademark of his Saxophone Choir which combines the sound of nine saxophones. Actually Pope, who is also a master of clarinet, oboe, flute, piccolo and piano, performs with a variety of ensembles ranging from trios and quartets to an all-star ensemble, with James Carter, Terell Stafford and Jeff „Tain“ Watts, among others, which he invited to join him for the recently released CD, „Odean’s List“ (IOR CD 77102-2) . Now he takes the opposite direction: On „Three“, with bassist Lee Smith and drummer Billy Hart, he focuses on a very essential way to show his art.



Pope and his two companions open up with a piece that is as mysterious as it is powerful: „Phrygian À Trois“ in the mode of the Phrygian church mode, is based on a restless ostinato and displays a circulating expressiveness on the sax, evoking an almost fabulous and antique scenery. „Fresh Breeze“ has a rather conventional approach, including a terrific walking bass by Lee Smith. In „Garden of Happiness“ Pope shows his lyrical qualities

with a melody shaped by wide-ranging intervallic jumps. He mixes the cheerful attitude of the piece, in which his two companions use their rhythmic freedom in a ingenious way, with a meditative, dreamy tone. As a counterpoint to this, comes „Good Question Two,“ which begins with a compact tutti and then develops into a breathtaking swing, including fulminating and concise solos by Smith and Hart.

The central „Blues It“, the only cover on the album, is an epic tribute to Pope’s long time Philadelphia companion, Hassan Ibn Ali - the semi-mythical pianist who played in the sixties with Max Roach and was only heard on one single LP. The rhythm section possesses an impulsive drive here and feeds the propelling flow of the leader. In the same spirit, Pope’s own „Blues For Eight“ follows, which once again comes up with fine final interludes by Smith and Hart. After a somewhat harsher tone on „Almost Like Pt One“ a downward winding phrase marks „12th Night“, and from it springs a natural source of improvisation. Almost teasingly, the trio’s work concludes with the high-spirited gem, „You And Me“, which employs a free jazz approach. Odean Pope and his colleagues affirm that there are innumerable ways to explore modern jazz, thanks to a commanding charisma of improvisation and melody.



Also available on IN + OUT Records:



IOR CD 77102-2
 ODEAN POPE
 ODEAN'S LIST