

BENNIE MAUPIN - A LIGHT BEARER

In the past there have been quite a few musicians bearing the name Benny: Benny Goodman, Benny Moten, Benny Bailey, Benny Harris, Benny Wallace, Benny Powell and Hank Crawford whose real name was Bennie. But, then, there is today a Bennie Maupin, a highly significant tenor saxophonist who is a light bearer of the music we lovingly call jazz. He is why I've chosen to write the words that follow.

Why do I refer to him as a light bearer? The light is his 'voice', his very being, emanating from the bowels of his saxophone that he mercifully shares with all listeners. That light, that voice goes out striking the medium of the air, awaiting ears, and hearts as he creates things never before having had an existence. This is what improvisation is all about ... *the moment*. Yes, the moment and that which occupies the space of that moment for only its duration as it immediately enters the realm of the past having hopefully and significantly played upon emotions. In freezing those moments for posterity, they are sometimes recorded and recalled again and again. Bennie Maupin has done this many times over so that there is an accurate record of his activity as he has ambitiously moved ahead from there to *here*.

He's here today not because of some twelve-week course he's pursued, but because of the many, many hours and years devoted to learning all the intricacies of his instrument and how to most effectively deal with them in telling stories born of his own fantasies and concepts. For sure this is a time-consuming, dedicated, votive and heroic effort whose reward can often be overwhelming as success raises it head with nutations of approval. He's done this under myriad circumstances to the delight of many. As a result, his music is vermiculated with a sense of adventure, anticipation, excitement, discovery and resolution. No small thing!

As in the case of so many who have preceded him in the past, Bennie, like them, is a harbinger of tomorrow as he creatively intuits and expertizes *today*, locking arms in tandem with the immutable element of time as it moves undeniably and unremittingly forward, not stopping for errors in judgment, sympathies or guilty consciences. The only voice it hears is its own as it never stops moving forward in realities and taking those of talent with it. Bennie is a constant companion/confederate as it irresistibly engages a never-ending sojourn. He is as a bullet spent as it leaves the muzzle, negating everything capable of stopping it before arriving at its intended target.

Because of all of these existing realities, we can ineluctably expect more of the same as the present stands of the shoulders of the past looking intently toward the future with its indistinguishable face. Yet a face to some degree, whose influence by Bennie Maupin, will have some bearing on its anticipated appearance. We all anxiously await. I must say, I am completely overwhelmed and humbled at having my name associated with his.
Bennie Maupin, Bravo!

Benny Golson
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