JAZZ JOURNAL

Audio Reviews

Brandon Allen: The Stanley Turrentine Project

The antipodean saxophonist focuses on Turrentine's Blue Note style, playing with a blues feeling and by turns muscular, soothing and mildly abrasive

By **Matthew Wright** - 11 April 2022

55

Australian saxophonist Brandon Allen has been a leading player on the UK scene for some time, and his past work has included a widely acclaimed tribute to Gene Ammons. Now Stanley Turrentine gets his attention, in a respectful reworking of some of the late saxophonist's material.

Turrentine had a mixed career – immensely popular, he made some fine albums, notably for Blue Note in the 60s and for CTI in the 70s. It has to be said though, the jury's still out on the later pop and fusion-influenced recordings.

Allen focuses on Turrentine's Blue Note style – Love For Sale (from *Up at Minton's*), And Satisfy and What Could I Do Without You (*Rough 'n' Tumble*), You're Gonna Hear From Me (*The Spoiler*), whilst Let It Go is from the Impulse album with Shirley Scott.

Allen states he "tried to capture the essence of that large ensemble feeling" with the tracks that had orchestral arrangements (Fool On The Hill, Little Green Apples, Evil), and it's done successfully. The sound and approach is pared down, jettisoning the strings and larger horn contingents, the quartet enabling Allen's strong, eloquent tone to shine through.

As with Turrentine, there is an underlying blues feeling in his playing – muscular and robust one moment, warm and soothing another, but stretching out with an abrasive edge. The soulful What Could I Do is a case in point, his forthright playing supported by downhome piano whilst Conor Chaplin's bass effectively underpins with the melody and pulse.

Both pianist Will Barry and drummer Dave Ingamells impress on Love For Sale, with its smart tempo changes and Ingamells' busy, chattering infills. Barry turns to his Rhodes on several tracks, which tends to be less punchy than his piano work. A minor point, however, as the album certainly captures the spirit of Turrentine. It would be worth searching out a live gig; meanwhile, this is a great taster.

Discography
Can't Buy Me Love; *You're Gonna Hear From Me*; *Love For Sale*; *Little Green Apples*; *What Could I Do Without You*; *And Satisfy*; *The Island*; *Let It Go*; *The Fool On The Hill*; *Evil*; *Mississippi City Strut* (62.57)
Allen (ts); Will Barry (p, Rhodes, cga); Conor Chaplin (b); Dave Ingamells (d).
Fish Factory, London, 4 January 2022.
Ubuntu UBU0111