

member of the Sixth Army Band at the Presidio in San Francisco. But he also began sitting in at clubs in the city and he finally obtained a second discharge to become a professional jazz musician.

Baker's drug addiction caused him to lead a disorganized and peripatetic life, his constant need for cash requiring him to accept many ill-advised recording offers, while his underemployability prevented him from making long-term commitments to record labels. As a result, his discography is extensive and wildly uneven.

In 1987, photographer and filmmaker Bruce Weber undertook a documentary film about Baker. The following year, Baker died in a fall from a hotel window in Amsterdam after taking heroin and cocaine. Weber's film, *Let's Get Lost*, premiered in September 1988 to critical acclaim and earned an Academy Award nomination. In 1997, Baker's unfinished autobiography was published under the title *As Though I Had Wings: The Lost Memoir* and the book was optioned by Miramax for a film adaptation.



Chet Baker's penultimate session for Riverside -- which was strictly instrumental produced an all-star lineup to support him, including jazz heavyweights Pepper Adams, Bill Evans, and Kenny Burrell. Each of them makes important contributions to the session. Adams' baritone sax solo on "Alone Together" is one of the album's high points, while Herbie Mann and Bill Evans make their presence known on several cuts. Baker possessed one of the most melodious trumpets in jazz, compelling in its simplicity. Rarely extending his range above a single octave, he nonetheless had few peers when it came to slow, romantic ballads, which make up the playlist here. His characteristically soft approach is heard to good effect on "It Never Entered My Mind," where he works with the guitar of Kenny Burrell. Burrell and Baker also collaborate on a moving rendition of "September Song." Chet is a good place to hear Baker's special way with the horn, and is made even more attractive with the presence and contributions of top jazz artists.

Chet Baker was a primary exponent of the West Coast school of cool jazz in the early and mid-'50s. As a trumpet-

er, he had a generally restrained, intimate playing style and he attracted attention beyond jazz for his photogenic looks and singing. But his career was marred by drug addiction.

Baker's father, Chesney Henry Baker, Sr., was a guitarist who was forced to turn to other work during the Depression; his mother, Vera (Moser) Baker, worked in a perfumery. The family moved from Oklahoma to Glendale, CA, in 1940. As a child, Baker sang at amateur competitions and in a church choir. Before his adolescence, his father brought home a trombone for him, then replaced it with a trumpet when the larger instrument proved too much for him. He had his first formal training in music in junior high and later at Glendale High School, but would play largely by ear for the rest of his life. In 1946, when he was only 16 years old, he dropped out of high school and his parents signed papers allowing him to enlist in the army; he was sent to Berlin, Germany, where he played in the 298th Army Band. After his discharge in 1948, he enrolled at El Camino College in Los Angeles, where he studied theory and harmony while playing in jazz clubs, but he quit college in the middle of his second year. He re-enlisted in the army in 1950 and became a

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- 1 Alone Together 6:46
- 2 How High The Moon 3:31
- 3 It Never Entered My Mind 4:36
- 4 'Tis Autumn 5:12
- 5 If You Could See Me Now 5:11
- 6 September Song 3:00
- 7 You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To 4:38
- 8 Time On My Hands 4:27
- 9 You And The Night And The Music 3:50

Trumpet – Chet Baker Baritone Saxophone – Pepper Adams Bass – Paul Chambers
Drums – Philly Joe Jones, Connie Kay Flute – Herbie Mann Guitar – Kenny Burrell Piano – Bill Evans
Recording Info: Engineer – Jack Higgins

Recorded at Reeves Sound Studios New York City on December 30, 1958 and January 19, 1959.



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