

NATHAN DAVIS HAPPY GIRL



Nathan Davis



Born Nathan Tate Davis on Feb. 15 1937, in Kansas City, Davis began to play trombone at the age of 17, but soon switched to reeds and became an accomplished player on flute, bass clarinet, tenor and soprano saxophones. His first noteworthy job was with the Jay McShann band, and a little later he became one of the few males who has ever played with the usually all-female International Sweethearts Of Rhythm. While studying at Kansas University, Davis lead a group with Carmell Jones; then army service in 1960 took him to Berlin. On leaving the army in 1963 he remained in Europe and was invited to Paris by Kenny "Klook" Clarke, with whom he played for most of the next six years.

In 1964 Davis joined Eric Dolphy for a brief residency at the Chat Qui Pech club and also played on the revolutionary reedsman's last recordings, made for the French radio station ORTF. The next year Davis toured Europe with Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers and was asked to join the band on a permanent basis; however, he declined, feeling that the touring life was too precarious.

After making a series of excellent (but long-deleted) albums for small European labels - featuring players such as Jones, Clarke, Woody Shaw, Larry Young, Mal Waldron and Hampton Hawes - Davis returned to the USA in 1969 to teach jazz at Pittsburgh University, where he has since remained. Davis holds a B.M.E. from the University of Kansas and a Ph.D. from Wesleyan University, Connecticut. He is presently a full Professor of Music at the

University of Pittsburgh where he founded the undergraduate Jazz Studies Program and helped establish a Ph.D. program in Ethnomusicology.

He continued to record sporadically in the '60's making two albums for the small Pittsburgh company Segue followed by three more for his own Tomorrow International label, on which he tried his hand at fusion: but, as with his European releases, these were never widely distributed. Davis has had bad luck with recordings: not only are most of his own albums unavailable, but his work with Blakey, Clarke and Dolphy remains largely unreleased. The situation began to change in the 80s: the London-based Hot House label reissued his 1967 John Coltrane homage, "Rules Of Freedom," and later released the new "London By Night."

In 1985, Davis formed the neo-bebop Paris Reunion Band, comprising various USA musicians who had lived in Paris in the 60s, recording and touring with them in the late 80s: personnel, at different times, has included Johnny Griffin, Joe Henderson, Shaw, Nat Adderley, Dizzy Reece, Slide Hampton, Kenny Drew, Jimmy Woode and Idris Muhammad. He also toured and recorded with the post-bop ensemble Roots. Both of these ensembles he went on to direct and tour with in the early '90's as well.

After 44 years, Davis retired from the University of Pittsburgh in June 2013. He died of congestive heart failure in Florida in April 2018 at the age of 81.

Nathan Davis Happy Girl

- 1 The Flute In The Blues 4:52
- 2 Spring Can Really Hang You Up The Most 6:31
- 3 Happy Girl 7:18
- 4 Evolution 7:15
- 5 Theme From Zoltan 5:20
- 6 Along Came Byrd 2:17
- 7 Mister E. 3:22

Tenor Saxophone, Soprano Saxophone, Flute - Nathan Davis Bass - Jimmy Woode
Drums - Billy Brooks Piano - Larry Young Trumpet - Woody Shaw
Engineer - R. Donner Producer - Joachim Ernst Berendt
Technician [Recording Director] - H.G. Brunner-Schwer, Willi Fruth
Recorded by SABA Records 1965