



spring/anthony williams

Considering the extraordinary talent assembled for Tony Williams' second Blue Note date as a leader, this could have been a landmark session. Unfortunately, it's not. Spring isn't totally forgettable; on the contrary, the fire expected by members of the Miles Davis Quintet (Williams, Herbie Hancock and Wayne Shorter), all thoroughly influenced by "the new thing," were unleashed completely from Miles' tight rein. Add tenor saxophonist Sam Rivers and Albert Ayler bassist Gary Peacock into this mix and that influence thrived. However, the five Tony Williams compositions (including the drum only "Echo") often failed to provoke the musicians into reaching crucial unity, making Spring haphazard, falling short of the expected goal. Following Spring, Williams would not release another solo date for four years, returning on the Polydor label with the groundbreaking electric rock trio recording Emergency!

Tony Williams' death in 1997 of a heart attack after routine gall bladder surgery was a major shock to the jazz world. Just 51, Williams (who could be a very loud drummer) seemed so youthful, healthy, and ageless even though he had been a major drummer for nearly 35 years. The open style that he created while with the Miles Davis Quintet in the mid- to late '60s remains quite influential, and he had a long list of accomplishments during the decades that followed. Williams' father, a saxophonist, took his son out to clubs that gave him an opportunity to sit in; at 11, the youngster already showed potential. He took lessons from Alan Dawson, and at 15 was appearing at Boston-area jam sessions. During 1959-1960, Williams often

played with Sam Rivers, and in December 1962 (when he was barely 17), the drummer moved to New York and played regularly with Jackie McLean. Within a few months he joined Miles Davis, where his ability to imply the beat while playing quite freely influenced and inspired the other musicians; together with Herbie Hancock and Ron Carter he was part of one of the great rhythm sections. Williams, who was 18 when he appeared on Eric Dolphy's classic *Out to Lunch* album, stayed with Davis into 1969, leading his own occasional sessions and becoming a household name in the jazz world.

In addition to his interest in avant-garde jazz, Tony Williams was a fan of rock music, and when he left Miles he formed the fusion band Lifetime, a trio with Larry Young and John McLaughlin. After leading other versions of Lifetime (one of them starring Allan Holdsworth), Williams stuck to freelancing for a time, studied composition, and toured with Herbie Hancock's V.S.O.P. band. By the mid-'80s, he was heading his own all-star hard bop group which featured Wallace Roney as a surrogate Miles Davis and a repertoire dominated by the drummer's originals (including the standard "Sister Cheryl"). After breaking up his longtime quintet in 1995, Williams gigged a bit with a trio, recorded a very interesting set of original music for the Ark 21 label, and seemed to have a limitless future. His premature death makes one grateful that he started his career early and that he was extensively documented.

Spring Anthony Williams

- 1 Extras 8:05
- 2 Echo 4:56
- 3 From Before 6:49
- 4 Love Song 8:21
- 5 Tee 10:29
- Total Time: 38:40

Transferred from a 2-track 15ips tape

Recorded on August 12, 1965 at the

Van Gelder Studio, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey by Blue Note Records



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