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★★★★☆ **Dedicated to the Memory of Maynard Ferguson - recommended for MF Fans**, May 8, 2007

By **John Tapscott** (Canada) - [See all my reviews](#)

REAL NAME™

It is entirely appropriate that the first recorded tribute to the late Maynard Ferguson comes from the Dan McMillion Jazz Orchestra. There is no more devoted follower of Maynard Ferguson, his trumpet style, and his music than Dan McMillion. Though no recording date is supplied, it is clear that the music on "High Octane" was recorded very near to the time of the great trumpeter's death. The CD insert includes this line, "This CD is dedicated to the memory of Maynard Ferguson, May 4, 1928 - August 23, 2006."

But in truth, all the Dan McMillion Jazz Orchestra CD's are tributes to Maynard Ferguson. "High Octane" falls directly in line with the pattern of McMillion's previous releases (all of which are very enjoyable and well recommended). At least eight of eleven tracks on the present CD come directly out of the Ferguson book from the 50's to the 90's. And the three charts that may not be from the Ferguson book are certainly written in the style of the Ferguson band. All the charts are played with power, precision and enthusiasm by this excellent Florida based band. One of the great attractions of the McMillion Jazz Orchestra is hearing the Ferguson book played with full big band instrumentation. Hear for example, the trombone section on "Another Star" and the baritone sax on "Night in Tunisia."

McMillion himself plays Maynard's parts and while there was only one Maynard Ferguson, McMillion does a more than credible job. In fact, his power and accuracy and high note chops are often quite astonishing (e.g. "Danny Boy", "Four"" and "Hey There"). On "Don't Let The Sun Go Down on Me" he passes Maynard's part over to lead trumpeter Chad Shoopman, who matches McMillion's power and chops. The band itself boasts some excellent soloists. Keith Oshiro shines on trombone and baritone horn, as do saxophonists David Moss, Tom Dietz and Dalton Hagler, trumpeter John De Paolo, and pianist Richard Drexler. Drummer Glen Bush is a strong and swinging though somewhat heavy-handed drummer. But then again this exciting music requires lots of power from the drum chair.

While "High Octane" is a tad short at 49 minutes, it is a warmly recommended tribute to arguably the greatest brass player of the 20th century. There is no doubt that Maynard Ferguson would have been be delighted by "High Octane." So too, will those listeners who love Ferguson's music or who have enjoyed any of the earlier CD's by the Dan McMillion Jazz Orchestra. Dan McMillion makes no great claim to originality, but his tireless devotion to Maynard Ferguson and big band jazz is paying high dividends for lovers of this art form.

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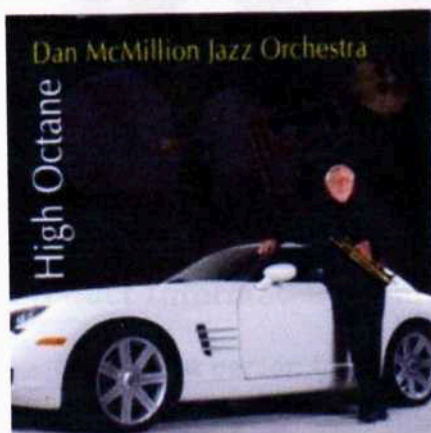
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## High Octane

Dan Mcmillion (Artist)

★★★★☆ (1 customer review)

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