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Featured Artist: Dan McMillion Jazz Orchestra

CD Title: High Octane

Year: 2007

Record Label: Sea Breeze Jazz

Style: Big Band / Swing

Musicians: Dan McMillion (trumpet, flugelhorn & Conn mellophonium), Chad Shoopman (lead trumpet), Jim Derrick, John Depaola, Wayne Daughtry, Elton Reyes (trumpet), Keith Oshiro (lead trombone, baritone horn), Dave Stamps, Robert Harrover, Chris Lundquist (trombone), Tom Dietz, Jennifer Mazziotti, David Moss, Dalton Hagler (saxophone), Richard Drexler (piano), Joe Porte (bass), Glen Bush (drums), Gumbi Ortiz (Latin percussion)



Review: *High Octane* and firing on all cylinders, this new CD release by big band leader and trumpeter Dan McMillion pushes his Jazz Orchestra well past the stratosphere. Paying tribute and dedicated to the memory of the master of high note screaming runs, Maynard Ferguson, the Dan McMillion Jazz Orchestra borrows from the Ferguson song book and plays with an energy matching the Ferguson big bands. As big bands go, this one is top notch and has more than a few highlight moments. From first-rate soloists, to great compositions and fantastic arrangements, this orchestra is a high energy swinging - trumpet featured band running on *High Octane*.

As I write this review on August 23, I come to realize this is the one year anniversary of the passing of trumpet virtuoso Maynard Ferguson, how fitting that I can listen to a tribute band to the master and not one that just pays lip service, but actually puts a little more into it than some of the Ferguson bands, more members in this band, more trumpets and some new arrangements that literally smoke from beginning to end - help to make it so.

The CD is not all about the trumpet, but primarily it is, with Mr. McMillion taking trumpet solos on just about every track, ten of the eleven songs that make up the CD feature his trumpet and he seems most comfortable in the hard to reach regions of the upper atmosphere. There are other nice features, the trombone playing of Keith Oshiro on "Take The A Train" is one such highlight moment, the arrangement by Don Sebesky adds some excellent excitement. The saxophone work of Glen Bush makes for a very nice change of pace on songs like Stevie Wonder's "Another Star," Miles Davis's, "Four" and the Dizzy Gillespie classic "A Night In Tunisia."

The lead trumpeter Chad Shoopman does a great job on an interesting arrangement of an Elton John pop song, "Don't Let The Sun Go Down On Me" he is joined in the soloing department by trombonist Keith Oshiro who can rock and get funky all in one run. The band has a great feel for this song and with a head bopping, foot stomping arrangement by Jay Chattaway it's a sure fire winner.

The album *High Octane* by the Dan McMillion Jazz Orchestra is a delightful tribute to "The Boss" Maynard Ferguson. If you like inspired trumpet playing, if you like big bands that can cook, or if you just want to relax and listen to some great music, this is a nice recording by a group of very good musicians playing some great music.

Tracks: Get It To Go, Latino Love Walk, Dancing Nightly, Danny Boy, Take The A Train, Another Star, Four, Don't Let The Sun Go Down On Me, A Night In Tunisia, Hey There, South 21st Street Shuffle

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