



DAN McMILLION JAZZ ORCHESTRA
High Octane

Sea Breeze Jazz SBJ-2141

Though high-note maestro Maynard Ferguson is gone, his indomitable spirit lives on in trumpeter Dan McMillion's Jazz Orchestra whose latest heart-stopping CD for Sea Breeze® Records, **High Octane**, delivers exactly what it promises while paying tribute to Maynard's prodigious talent and irrepressible exuberance.

McMillion, one of Ferguson's most ardent admirers and perceptive disciples, plays the trumpet the way his mentor advised, with reckless abandon, and has fashioned his orchestra in the image of Ferguson's explosive ensembles from the '50s, '60s, '70s and beyond. As on previous albums (this is his sixth, and fourth on Sea Breeze), McMillion has torn a few pages from Maynard's "book," playing a number of songs whose popularity was amplified by the legendary trumpeter, and one, "**Latino Love Walk**," that was written by Ferguson himself.

Two of those charts, Don Sebesky's soul-stirring arrangement of the traditional Irish folk song "Danny Boy" and Willie Maiden's sensitive treatment of the Richard Adler / Jerry Ross Broadway show-stopper, "**Hey There**," were among Maynard's crowd-pleasing hallmarks, and the trailblazer surely would have admired these versions, on which McMillion reaches boldly for the stratosphere and brushes it more than a few times. While McMillion is featured on most tracks, playing either trumpet, flugelhorn or mellophonium (on Bill Holman's groovy "**Dancing Nightly**"), he steps aside to let the orchestra's splendid lead trumpeter, Chad Shoopman, bare his formidable chops on Jay Chattaway's powerful arrangement of Elton John's "**Don't Let the Sun Go Down on Me**." Also heard on Elton's classic is trombonist Keith Oshiro, a former member of Ferguson's volcanic nonet, Big Bop Nouveau.

The orchestra tests the speed limit immediately on Glenn Kostur's fast-paced "**Get It to Go**," on which McMillion, Oshiro and tenor David Moss burn rubber. The swaying "**Latino Love Walk**" is next, with McMillion and alto Tom Dietz sharing the spotlight. Oshiro switches to baritone horn for a perky solo on which precedes Sebesky's superb arrangements of "**Danny Boy**" and Billy Strayhorn's "**Take the 'A' Train**." McMillion solos with Oshiro on "**Train**," with Moss and drummer Glen Bush on Stevie Wonder's "**Another Star**," and with Moss and trumpeter John DePaola on Keith Bishop's big-band revision of Miles Davis' bop standard, "**Four**." Completing the program are Dizzy Gillespie's Latin archetype, "**A Night in Tunisia**," neatly arranged by Wayne Beardwood, and Steve Wiest's swaggering "**South 21st Street Shuffle**," with persuasive solos courtesy of McMillion, Moss (on soprano), baritone Dalton Hagler and percussionist Gumbi Ortiz on "**Tunisia**," McMillion and Hagler on "**Shuffle**."

McMillion and the orchestra hit the road in high gear and keep the pedal to the metal throughout this breathtaking safari, seldom pausing for a tire change or tune-up en route to a gratifying and well-earned victory. This is precisely the sort of **High Octane** performance that McMillion's illustrious precursor, Maynard Ferguson, would have relished and applauded. And so will you.