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NOTE: Any codas (\oplus) that appear will be played only once on the recording at the end of the last recorded chorus.

The music of Oliver Nelson Sr. has been and continues to be a source of deep pleasure and inspiration for me. In thinking about my dad's genius, I remember several times when some of the world's greatest players would gather to rehearse a new composition. The musicians would find themselves both delighted and humbled by the beauty and complexity of his music.

I was both honored and pleased when Jamey Aebersold approached me about this project. The tunes I have chosen are personal favorites, which I hope will both challenge and inspire. I would advise the participant to listen to the original recordings which will provide a greater insight into the man and his music.

Oliver Nelson, Jr.

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INTRODUCTION

Oliver Nelson was, first and foremost, a composer. His saxophone solos were spare and carefully constructed, in stark contrast to the much more verbose and spontaneous sounding work of Charlie Parker and John Coltrane, the leading saxophonists when Nelson was coming up in St. Louis. Born into a musical family in 1932, he took up saxophone at age 11. When he was in high school the most important influence in jazz was Charlie Parker, but Nelson was drawn to the great lead altoists - especially Johnny Hodges, but also Willie Smith and Otto Hardwicke. His interest in these men naturally led to playing lead alto with territory bands around St. Louis - Nat Towles and George Hudson used him in their bands before Nelson went into the Marines in 1952. After his discharge he studied theory and composition, getting his MM degree from Lincoln University in Missouri in 1958. He moved to New York and made his first of a series of records as a leader for Prestige in 1959 while playing big band gigs with Louie Bellson, Duke Ellington and others. Then, as Nelson told it in a 1975 interview, "...my first success as a leader and composer came when Creed Taylor asked me to put together, in New York, a recording group for the album 'Blues And The Abstract Truth' (currently available on Impulse IMPD-154)...Then one of the pieces from the album, *Stolen Moments*, got published in Down Beat. And that led to other writing..." The album was one of the first batch issued by Impulse, and was important in establishing the label as well as solidifying Creed Taylor's reputation as a producer. Taylor soon moved to the Verve label, and gave Nelson plenty of work as an arranger on albums by Jimmy Smith (*Walk On The Wild Side* was a Nelson arrangement), Wes Montgomery (*Goin' Out of My Head*), Cal Tjader and others. Nelson was also making his own albums for Verve and other labels during this period, and commissions for extended works were pouring in as well as arranging assignments. In 1967 Nelson moved to Hollywood and became immersed in film and TV writing. As the 70's progressed, he tried to get back into performing on top of his composing, arranging and TV work, and the strain became too great. Nelson died in 1975 of a heart attack one morning after taping an episode of "The Six Million Dollar Man"; he was 43.

Most of the tunes on this album were written for smallgroup dates in 1960 and 1961. Several (particularly *Patterns* and *Straight Ahead*) are derived from exercises found in his book "Patterns For Saxophone," later reissued as "Patterns for Improvisation," a book that has become an important practice tool for all instrumentalists. Some of the titles have special significance - *Teenie's Blues* was written for Nelson's younger sister, and *Elegy For A Duck* was originally composed as part of a jazz version of "Peter And The Wolf" featuring organist Jimmy Smith. *I Remember Bird*, a blues by critic Leonard Feather, is the only tune on the album not composed by Nelson. It was originally recorded under Leonard Feather's name but is now on an Oliver Nelson CD on Verve. Phil Woods, who was featured on the original recording, liked it enough to include it in the repertoire of his European Rhythm Machine group. And *Stolen Moments* is now a jazz standard, with several new recordings each year.

Phil Bailey 7/28/96



3. Latino

PLAY 9 TIMES (♩ = 208)

INTRO **LATIN**
 EbΔ DbΔ EbΔ

LATIN
 EbΔ DbΔ EbΔ

SWING
 F- Bb7

LATIN
 EbΔ DbΔ

SWING
 G- C7 B- E7

LATIN
 EbΔ DbΔ

SWING
 EbΔ F7 Bb7+4

SOLOS
 EbΔ EbΔ DbΔ C- F7 Bb7+4

SOLOS
 EbΔ G- C7 C- F7 B- E7

SOLOS
 DbΔ EbΔ DbΔ C- F7 Bb7+4

SOLOS
 EbΔ DbΔ EbΔ DbΔ CΔ



11. Straight Ahead

PLAY 3 TIMES (♩ = 252)

DRUM SOLO INTRO

A

C-/F INTRO Cont. . .

F pedal on 2 & 4

C#-/F#

F# pedal

C-/F

F pedal

B

DRUMS

MELODY

C-

D-

G7

C-

F

F pedal

C-/F

2. C-/F

C-

F7

C-

F7

C-

F7

Eb7

Ab-

Db7

Ab-

7+9

B7

C-

D

C-

D-

G7

C-

C#-/F#

pedal

F# pedal

C-

F7

Bb

2

SOLO BREAK