

Lee Morgan – Caramba (1996)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Caramba* 12:24 2. *Suicide City* 7:32 3. *Cunning Lee* 6:13 4. *Soulita* 6:03 5. *Helen's Ritual* 6:29 6. *A Baby's Smile* 6:00 Lee Morgan -Trumpet Bennie Maupin - Tenor Sax Cedar Walton -Piano Reggie Workman - Bass Billy Higgins – Drums

Until its 1996 reissue, this was one of the most obscure of all Lee Morgan Blue Note albums. A transitional effort that finds the trumpeter gradually moving beyond hard bop into more modal music, the date starts out with the surprisingly derivative title cut which is very similar to Eddie Harris' "Listen Here." Of the other selections, "Soulita" has the catchiest melody while Cal Massey's slow ballad "A Baby's Smile" was previously unreleased. While Morgan and his fine rhythm section (pianist Cedar Walton, bassist Reggie Workman and drummer Billy Higgins) are in typically swinging form, *Caramba* is most notable for featuring the young Bennie Maupin. Sticking exclusively to tenor, Maupin (who would be much more distinctive within a year) mixes together Joe Henderson and Wayne Shorter in winning fashion. - Scott Yanow, AllMusic Review

Don't let the cheesy album cover fool you, Lee Morgan's "Caramba" is a hard bop fiesta. This Blue Note session was recorded on May 3, 1968 and features three of Lee's old buddies -- Cedar Walton on piano, Reggie Workman on bass and Billy Higgins on drums -- joining a then relative jazz newcomer, tenor saxophonist Bennie Maupin. The disc's material is classic late Lee, from the laidback groove of the title track to the energetic, hard driving (and oddly titled) "Suicide City." All of the tunes are penned by Morgan, except for fellow Philadelphian Cal Massey's ballad "A Baby's Smile," which is issued on this CD for the first time. While this disc is not on par with "The Sidewinder" or "The Rumpoller," you won't say "Ay Caramba" after purchasing "Caramba." ---amazon.com

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