

## Chet Baker & Bill Evans □ – The Complete Legendary Sessions (2010)

Written by bluesever

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Chet - The Lyrical Trumpet Of Chet Baker 1 *Alone Together* 2 *How High The Moon* 3 *It Never Entered In My Mind* 4 *'Tis Autumn* 5 *If You Could See Me Now* 6 *September Song* 7 *You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To* 8 *Time On My Hands* 9 *You And The Night And The Music* 10 *Early Morning Mood*

Chet Baker Plays The Best Of Lerner And Loewe

11 *Show Me* 12 *I Talk To The Trees* 13 *Thank Heaven For Little Girls* 14 *I Could Have Danced All Night* 15 *Almost Like Being In Love*

Alto Saxophone – Zoot Sims (tracks: 10, 13) Baritone Saxophone – Pepper Adams (tracks: 1 to 11, 13, 14) Bass – Earl May (tracks: 11 to 14), Paul Chambers (3) (tracks: 1 to 10) Drums – "Philly" Joe Jones (tracks: 4, 8, 9), Clifford Jarvis (tracks: 11 to 14), Connie Kay (tracks: 1 to 3, 5 to 7, 10) Flute – Herbie Mann (tracks: 1 to 11, 13, 14) Guitar – Kenny Burrell (tracks: 3, 6) Piano – Bill Evans (tracks: 1 to 14), Bob Corwin (tracks: 15) Tenor Saxophone – Herbie Mann (tracks: 15), Zoot Sims (tracks: 11, 15) Trumpet – Chet Baker

Never have two musicians seemed so alike in temperament yet differed so much in their approach to making music as Chet Baker and Bill Evans. While both were peerless masters of their instruments and shared a rich, evocatively lyrical playing style that bordered beguilingly on the introspective, Baker and Evans were polar opposites when it came to the discipline of performance.

Though both were heroin addicts, the musically-trained Evans never let it interfere with his meticulously precise flights of invention while the self-taught Baker became increasingly erratic and inconsistent. They ventured into a recording studio together on just three occasions, with largely disappointing results, their potentially combustible collaboration failing to ignite and all too frequently sounding workmanlike and uninspiring.

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The Complete Legendary Sessions corrals the 15 tracks that resulted from those sessions – previously issued on two 1959 albums: Chet, and Chet Baker Plays the Best of Lerner and Loewe – together for the first time, with a vocals-free Baker concentrating on his horn playing.

Occupying the first 10 tracks (absent from the LP release, Early Morning Mood appears here as a welcome bookend) Chet turns in satisfyingly laidback but unexciting performances. Sparks of energy are provided by Herbie Mann's flute, the baritone sax of Pepper Adams, Connie Kay and Philly Joe Jones on percussion, guitarist Kenny Burrell and bass man Paul Chambers, who all go about their business with a winningly insouciant confidence.

Album opener Alone Together continues to cast a shimmering, dark-hued spell half a century later, Baker breathing long, lingering, hypnotic lines that flex and flow with understated panache. The prevailing mood is melancholic and down-tempo, with the virtually somnambulant Baker and overly cautious Evans remaining curiously semi-detached from each other throughout.

The Lerner and Loewe material offers livelier fare, but Baker remains strangely subdued and understatement continues to be Evans's default even in the love-lit delirium of I Could Have Danced All Night. A bonus cover of Almost Like Being in Love sways rather than swings, with Bob Corwin stepping in for Evans.

As a glimpse of what might have been had these two been on form, this tantalises and frustrates in equal measure. --- Michael Quinn, BBC Reviews

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