

Chet Baker Meets Space Jazz Trio - Little Girl Blue (1988)

Written by bluesever

Tuesday, 20 November 2018 12:11 -

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1. *I Thought About You* 12:44 2. *Come Rain or Come Shine* 7:13 3. *Blue in Green* 9:50 4. *House of Jade* 4:44 5. *Old Devil Moon* 6:05 6. *Little Girl Blue* 6:58 7. *Just One of Those Things* 9:39 Chet Baker – Trumpet, Vocals Enrico Pieranunzi – Piano Enzo Pietropaoli – Bass Fabrizio Sferra – Drums

I don't know why Enrico Pieranunzi called his band the "Space Jazz Trio". There is nothing particularly spacey about it, no electronic or even electric instruments, in fact this is as traditional an acoustic record as possible. Nothing like the fusion pop album you might take this to be, in fact it is a bona fide ... collaboration in the same spirit as their other two albums.

This is also Chet's last studio recording, made two months before his death and only a day after *The Heart of the Ballad*, and it is in a way comforting that Pieranunzi, a pianist who was fully compatible with Chet's style and yet had a much more individualistic approach than Baker's long-time collaborator Michel Graillier, would be his partner on these significant dates.

Little Girl Blue is a loose, almost meditative album. Baker, always a chameleon who could adapt to his sidemen, plays in a style as delicate as Pieranunzi's piano, almost whispers his phrases, plays beautiful melodies that almost, but only almost, fall apart and are held together only by the thinnest of threads, but beautifully so. Therefore, this album is quite unlike the laid-back *Soft Journey*, which glides along almost effortlessly -- such moments are rare, as on "*Come Rain or Come Shine*", and even there they're not kept up throughout the whole song. In stark contrast, Bill Evans' "*Blue in Green*" is not going anywhere, it just is, and it is admirable that way, almost like an ambient sound sculpture.

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Occasionally, it's not quite clear to what extent the tracks turned out like this on purpose or whether Baker was simply tired; "House of Jade" for example sounds a bit disoriented.

Overall, Little Girl Blue is, however, a very rewarding album full of positive vibes. "Old Devil Moon", "Just one of Those Things" and "Little Girl Blue" are revisited here almost thirty years after Baker last recorded them, and he seems to feel totally at ease with them. Especially his singing on the latter is one of his most chilling performances on record, wonderfully accompanied by Pieranunzi.

Baker's last studio album is not a massive masterpiece, but an understated, well-made, well-balanced, delicate and emotional album, a nice document to remember him by. ---hprill, rateyourmusic.com

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