

## Coleman Hawkins - The Hawk Relaxes (1961)

Written by bluesever  
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1 *I'll Never Be The Same* 6:08 2 *When Day Is Done* 4:24 3 *Under A Blanket Of Blue* 4:35 4 *More Than You Know* 4:09 5 *Moonglow* 5:58 6 *Just A Gigolo* 5:04 7 *Speak Low* 6:39  
Coleman Hawkins - Sax (Tenor) Ronnell Bright – Piano Kenny Burrell – Guitar Ron Carter – Bass Andrew Cyrille – Drums

It is said that one grows wiser and mellower with age, as proven by this recording from Coleman Hawkins that is a successful follow-up to his previous Moodsville album *At Ease*. There is a difference, as Kenny Burrell joins the legendary tenor saxophonist in this quintet setting, with no threat of upstaging or even a hint of any real showcasing of the guitarist's then developing laid-back side. Underrated Ronnell Bright is on the piano, and also proves a veritable equal to Hawkins even more than Burrell. But it is the burgeoning talent of bassist Ron Carter and drummer Andrew Cyrille who mark their territory, not as the maverick individualists they would become, but as supple performers who understand the strength of Hawkins from a modest standpoint. Not all ballads, the fare is standard American popular song played for people sitting by the fire, the calm ocean, or late at night with a sweetheart over candles and wine. Any version of a well-known tune can be made classic by Hawkins, as heard during the somber "I'll Never Be The Same," the straight ballad "Under a Blanket of Blue" with the tenor's slight fluttery trills, or "Just a Gigolo" where the spotlight is firmly focused on the leader's droll tones. Burrell's strumming on "When Day Is Done" signifies a downplayed, wound down feeling, and where he generally chooses a sublimated role in these recordings, he does come out with a strong lead melody for the soulful ballad "More Than You Know." The modified tunes on the session are the midtempo take of "Moonglow" as Hawkins adopts some of Lester Young's swagger as Cyrille's nimble brushwork keeps the song moving forward. "Speak Low" is interpreted in a sleek and seductive calypso beat ably conjured by the drummer, a nice touch to end the album. This quintet -- as unique as any Hawkins ever fronted -- speaks to his open mindedness, but more so to his innate ability in adapting musicians to his situational hitting. *The Hawk Relaxes* is one of his best latter period efforts. ---Michael G. Nastos, Rovi

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