

Coleman Hawkins Encounters Ben Webster (1957)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Blues For Yolande* 6:44 2. *Maria* 3. *It Never Entered My Mind* 5:46 4. *Prisoner Of Love* 4:12 [play](#) 5. *Tangerine* 5:20 6. *La Rosita* 5:02 7. *Coctail For Two* [play](#) 8. *Shine On Harvest Moon* 4:48 9. *You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To* 4:15

Musicians: Coleman Hawkins (tenor saxophone); Herb Ellis (guitar); Ben Webster (tenor saxophone); Oscar Peterson (piano); Ray Brown (bass); Alvin Stoller (drums).

Coleman Hawkins and Ben Webster first met at a Kansas City jam session at which Hawkins finally encountered his match in local tenors Webster, Herschel Evans, and Lester Young. The all-night meeting has become the stuff of legend (and a continuous thread in Robert Altman's film *Kansas City*, though there it's reduced to two tenors). Recorded by Norman Granz, this 1957 meeting supports the two with fine accompaniment that includes Oscar Peterson, Ray Brown, and Herb Ellis. The material includes the great "Blues for Yolanda," with a honking, squeaking solo that suggests Hawkins is the father of all R&B tenor saxophonists as well as those in jazz, while "Rosalita" has an engaging Latin beat. There's also plenty of room for the two to display their ballad art, but there's no real competition between the two big-toned, gruff tenorists, each a mature artist enjoying the highest challenge a peer might offer. ---Stuart Broomer

Some might say (including historians, musical producers and liner notes writers) that Hawkins was much better than Webster, that only Young could equal his power with his unique approach. Even if this is true, the level at which Hawk and Webster play is so high that I see the meeting of two true giants. Impeccable rhythm section led by great Oscar Peterson always helps at these Verve style encounters and I feel that both tenor plays made the best of it. Whether it is gentle ballads, blowing the blues or harmonizing in rhythm, this CD should satisfy not only

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swing and mainstream fans but also modern jazz fans: mainstream by definition leans somewhat towards modern jazz and Hawk and Peterson particularly well blend the best of both worlds (as they did through their careers; Hawkins even before modern jazz was born). A classic. --- Nikica Gilic

This 1957 session brings together two of the most important tenor saxophonists in jazz history. Coleman Hawkins is known as the father of the jazz sax, while Webster may be its greatest balladeer. COLEMAN HAWKINS ENCOUNTERS BEN WEBSTER highlights the talents of both tenor men nicely, with Hawkins and Webster consistently complementing each other's playing. In fact, they develop a kind of conversational interplay that is quite beautiful, particularly on the gentle "It Never Entered My Mind" and the slowly swinging "Shine on Harvest Moon." Although the rest of the band consists of stellar musicians (including pianist Oscar Peterson and guitarist Herb Ellis), they concede the spotlight to Hawkins and Webster, whose dual saxophones more than carry the record. Other standout tracks include the sultry ballad "Tangerine" and the Latin-flavored "La Rosita." --- Nat Hentoff

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