

John Coltrane – Blue Train (1957)

Written by bluesever

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1. "Blue Train" (Coltrane) – 10:43 2. "Moment's Notice" (Coltrane) – 9:10 3. "Locomotion" (Coltrane) – 7:14 4. "I'm Old Fashioned" (Kern/Mercer) – 7:58 5. "Lazy Bird"(Coltrane) – 7:00
Alternate takes (1997 CD release only): 6. "Blue Train" (alternate take) – 9:58 7. "Lazy Bird" (alternate take) – 7:12
Paul Chambers - Bass John Coltrane - Sax (Tenor) Kenny Drew - Piano Curtis Fuller - Trombone Jo Jones - Drums Philly Joe Jones - Drums Lee Morgan - Trumpet

Although never formally signed, an oral agreement between John Coltrane and Blue Note Records founder Alfred Lion was indeed honored on Blue Train -- Coltrane's only collection of sides as a principal artist for the venerable label. The disc is packed solid with sonic evidence of Coltrane's innate leadership abilities. He not only addresses the tunes at hand, but also simultaneously reinvents himself as a multifaceted interpreter of both hard bop as well as sensitive balladry -- touching upon all forms in between. The personnel on Blue Train is arguably as impressive as what they're playing. Joining Coltrane (tenor sax) are Lee Morgan (trumpet), Curtis Fuller (trombone), Kenny Drew (piano), Paul Chambers (bass), and Philly Joe Jones (drums). The triple horn arrangements incorporate an additional sonic density that remains a trademark unique to both this band and album. Of particular note is Fuller's even-toned trombone, which bops throughout the title track as well as the frenetic "Moments Notice." Other solos include Paul Chambers' subtly understated riffs on "Blue Train" as well as the high energy and impact from contributions by Lee Morgan and Kenny Drew during "Locomotion." The track likewise features some brief but vital contributions from Philly Joe Jones -- whose efforts throughout the record stand among his personal best. Of the five sides that comprise the original Blue Train, the Jerome Kern/Johnny Mercer ballad "I'm Old Fashioned" is the only standard; in terms of unadulterated sentiment, this version is arguably untouchable. Fuller's rich tones and Drew's tastefully executed solos cleanly wrap around Jones' steadily languid rhythms. Without reservation, Blue Train can easily be considered in and among the most important and influential entries not only of John Coltrane's career, but of the entire genre of jazz music as well. ---Lindsay Planer, Rovi

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