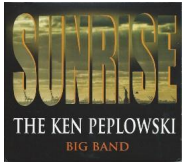


The Ken Peplowski Big Band – Sunrise (2018)



1 *All I Need Is The Girl* 5:26 2 *Chega De Saudade* 6:18 3 *Estate* 7:07 4 *If I Were A Bell* 7:07 5 *Clarinet In Springtime* 5:13 6 *When You Wish Upon A Star* 5:13 7 *The Eternal Triangle* 6:26 8 *Spring Is Here* 5:49 9 *Duet* 3:20 10 *The One I Love Belongs To Somebody Else* 6:07 11 *I Like The Sunrise* 6:42 12 *Come Back To Me* 4:26 Bass – Nicki Parrott
Clarinet, Leader, Liner Notes – Ken Peplowski Drums – Chuck Redd Guitar – Matt Munisteri
Piano – Ehud Asherie Saxophone, Flute, Clarinet – Adrian Cunningham, Carl Maraghi, Jack Stuckey, Jon Gordon, Mark Lopeman Trombone – Bruce Eidem, Harvey Tibbs, Jennifer Wharton, John Allred Trumpet – Andy Gravish, Jon-Erik Kellso, Randy Reinhart, Bob Millikan

Many contemporary big bands are all about "breaking new ground" and "exploring new pathways." Not this one. Ace clarinetist Ken Peplowski, who has performed and recorded with myriad large ensembles, at home and abroad, but has seldom led one—although he did record one other big-band album, *Last Swing of the Century* (Concord Jazz, 1999)—simply wants to make beautiful music, a goal he and his hand-picked corps of merry men (and one woman) easily reach on *Sunrise*, as they glide smoothly through a dozen numbers gleaned from the Great American Songbook and elsewhere.

Among Peplowski's choices are some pleasant surprises, starting with Billy May's walking arrangement of the seldom-heard "All I Need Is the Girl" from Broadway's *Gypsy*. It's the first of three charts by May, two coming from an album recorded by Frank Sinatra with the Duke Ellington Orchestra (the other being the Burton Lane / Alan Jay Lerner flag-waver, "Come Back to Me"). Four of the charts were mapped out by drummers, Antonio Carlos Jobim's "Chega de Saudade" and the Leigh Harline / Ned Washington classic "When You Wish Upon a Star" by the late Allan Ganley, the Latin favorite "Estate" and Frank Loesser's "If I Were a Bell" (from the Broadway smash *Guys and Dolls*) by former Basie timekeeper Dennis Mackrel. Saxophonist Mark Lopeman arranged Sonny Stitt's "The Eternal Triangle," Rodgers and Hart's "Spring Is Here," Ellington's "I Like the Sunrise" and Gus Kahn / Isham Jones' "The One I Love Belongs to

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Somebody Else," and Alec Wilder scored his own composition, "Clarinet in Springtime."

Having set the scene, it should be noted that unconditional admiration for Sunrise must clearly rest, in some measure, on fondness for the clarinet, as Peplowski—a versatile and creative soloist from the Goodman / Shaw / Jimmy Hamilton school of swing—is showcased on every number. For clarinet-lovers in general and music-lovers in particular, that's good news. It does mean, however, that solo space for other members of the band is limited. There's an uncredited trombone solo (John Allred?) on "If I Were a Bell," others by alto Jon Gordon (also uncredited), tenor Adrian Cunningham and pianist Ehud Asherie ("Eternal Triangle"), Asherie again ("The One I Love") and tenor Lopeman ("Come Back to Me"). Elsewhere, it's all Peplowski all the time.

To phrase it another way, there's no doubt that this is the Ken Peplowski Big Band. If that is to your liking, you'll no doubt welcome and appreciate this most pleasant Sunrise. ---Jack Bowers, allaboutjazz.com

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