The Jimmy Owens-Kenny Barron Quintet – You Had Better Listen (1967)

A1 You Had Better Listen 8:30 A2 The Night We Called It A Day 5:08 B1 Gichi 6:30 B2 Love, Where Are You? 6:51 B3 Carolina John 8:07 Bass – Christopher White Drums – Freddie Waits (tracks: A1, A2, B2), Rudy Collins (tracks: B1, B3) Piano – Kenny Barron Tenor Saxophone, Flute – Benny Maupin Trumpet, Flugelhorn – Jimmy Owens

Kenny Barron and Jimmy Owens' first recording was a solid debut. The exciting title cut, "You Had Better Listen," composed by Jimmy Owens, is good, basic, uptempo jazz, nothing fancy, no frills. The Jimmy Owens-Kenny Barron Quintet doesn't condescend like some jazz artists tend to do; casuals can groove, relate, nod their heads in approval and feel righteous about it. Owens plays some beautiful trumpet scales, while Barron keeps busy banging chord progressions. The other members of the quintet are Benny Maupin (tenor sax, flute), Chris White (bass), Freddie Waits (drums on tracks one, two and four), and Rudy Collins (drums on tracks three through five). Owens' sparkling flügelhorn spices "The Night We Call It a Day." Barron composed the strutting "Gichi," Maupin and Owens blowing as one introduces the bebopper, White's bass is cool and steady, and Collins' drum work is incredibly creative. Owens comes in later and spits a series of darting trumpet hits before rejoining Maupin near the conclusion for a cutting contest. Moody and occasionally happy, but mostly maudlin, best describes "Love, Where Are You," an exercise in cool; Owens gives a trumpet clinic, while White's walking basslines titillate the ears. "Carolina John," is Maupin's best showcase, his flute work is understated throughout the LP, but he plays a mad tenor on this cut, his attention-getting solo is followed by some remarkable horn work by Owens. ---Andrew Hamilton, AllMusic Review

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