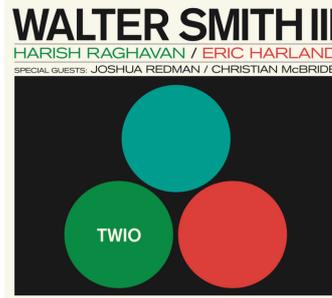


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WALTER SMITH III TWIO

- 1 Ask Me Now (T. Monk) GB-4DA-18-00026
- 2 Nobody Else But Me (J. Kern) GB-4DA-18-00027
- 3 On The Trail (F. Grofe) GB-4DA-18-00028
- 4 We'll Be Together Again (C. Fischer) GB-4DA-18-00029
- 5 I'll Be Seeing You (S. Fain) GB-4DA-18-00030
- 6 Adam's Apple (W. Shorter) GB-4DA-18-00031
- 7 The Peacocks (J. Rowles) GB-4DA-18-00032
- 8 Social Call (G. Gryce) GB-4DA-18-00033
- 9 Contrafact (W. Smith III) GB-4DA-18-00034



The joyful freedom of Ferde Grofé's 'On the Trail' captures precisely the intended spirit of **Walter Smith III's** new album *Twio*. Collaborating closely with established colleagues in double bassist **Harish Raghavan** and drummer **Eric Harland**, the Texas-native, California-based tenor saxophonist & composer presents his own illuminating vision of the saxophone trio while also inviting, along the way,

guest appearances by **Joshua Redman** (tenor saxophone) and **Christian McBride** (double bass).

Working and touring for the last fifteen years, playing multi-layered compositions in different configurations with artists such as Terence Blanchard, Roy Haynes, Sean Jones, Ambrose Akinmusire and with his own bands, Smith also began to revisit classic jazz songs. He elaborates: "I would try and alter tunes quite radically by rearranging, reharmonizing and altering meters to a point where I was barely playing the original song; but realized that I was confusing the point of playing the songs, so I began to interpret them more directly, as they were first meant to be played. For this album, out of around twenty recorded songs, I chose nine pieces that I have a particular relationship with and have always loved playing, including some which are maybe less frequently heard".

While that concept appears straightforward, this recording (the saxophonist's fifth as leader) reveals much about the ultra-confidence and musicality which these established players bring to the table, entering the studio to intuitively share ideas and discover uncharted paths. Taking sparkling dual-tenor feature 'Contrafact' as an illustration (crafted around 'Like Someone in Love', but in a five meter), Smith explains: "I simply sent Josh the melody and we showed up and played... With no rehearsal, it was just 'OK, here we go'; and that's what I wanted for this project – just fun and live; an open sound without a chordal instrument defining the harmony, rhythm or direction. I had ideas for endings, for example, but on once instance after I had said to Christian, "We'll close it like this", when we got to that point he did something different which was perfect because it helped the music feel loose. We were all receptive to that organic process".

Here, Thelonious Monk's 'Ask Me Now' waltzes and trips through "a million chord changes", Smith ever the ebullient, characterful melodicist; then Harish Raghavan's pacey, bass propulsion of the popular Jerome Kern 'Showboat' tune, 'Nobody Else But Me', is embellished by Harland's coruscating percussion. Sammy Fein's amiable 'I'll Be Seeing You' becomes buoyed by McBride's clear, strutting bass; and the evergreen groove of Wayne Shorter's 'Adam's Apple' is fascinating in fizzing drum-featured trio guise. Two duo spots offer Carl Fischer's 'We'll Be Together Again' for sax and drums ("one of the best A-sections of a song ever written") and a blithe sax-and-bass promenade on Gigi Gryce's 'Social Call'. Jimmy Rowles' 'The Peacocks' is bathed in luscious tenor sonorities, and that Dayna Stephens arrangement of 'On the Trail' is a six-minute wonder as Smith and Redman josh genially across the rhythm section.

"I was pleased that Twio ended up being so close to what I wanted it be", enthuses Smith. "It was unlike any other recording I've done, because there was nothing for me to actually prepare other than go along to the studio, play and hang out. The point of the album is 'community' – normally when we tour with original music, it's hard to invite people up on the stage to join the band because they are simply unfamiliar with that particular repertoire that I or someone else in the group has written. This project represents something that everyone of all levels can relate to because it presents familiar and accessible songs that we've all grown up playing. The plan is that when we tour, I'll use that opportunity to invite the community to come sit in, have fun, and share ideas, which I imagined this music was all about in the first place."



WALTER SMITH III

Personnel

Album Credits

Walter Smith III
tenor saxophone

Recorded at
Sear Sound and GSI Studios
by **Chris Allen**

Harish Raghaven
bass (1, 2, 6 & 7)

Mixed by **Chris Allen**

Eric Harland - drums

Mastered by **Paul Blakemore**

Special guests

Produced by **Chris Dunn**

Christian McBride
bass (3, 5, 8 & 9)

Executive Producer
for Whirlwind Recordings
Michael Janisch

Joshua Redman
tenor saxophone (3 & 9)

Original design by **Julian Montague**
Photography by **Jati Lindsay**

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