

SMOKE SESSIONS RECORDS

**AVAILABLE NOW on Smoke Sessions Records:
Trombonist STEVE DAVIS Pays Tribute
to the Immortal J.J. Johnson on *Say When***



"Say When'...burnishes his hard-bop bona fides." - **The New York Times**

One of the most meaningful moments in the remarkable trombonist **Steve Davis'** life occurred when he first met his idol, **J.J. Johnson**. It was the morning after the immortal trombonist heard Davis play for the first time. "I walked in the theater and I heard this tremendous, warm sound and clean, clear articulation and sophisticated harmonic ideas. Yeah, Stevie, you're right on track, baby. Keep it up. You sound beautiful, baby." In recalling it, Davis says, "It was like getting my passport stamped. It's just meant the world to me."

Davis, now beloved and highly influential in his own right, has always viewed J.J. not just as the inspiration for every modern jazz trombonist, but as the model upon which his personal artistic aspirations are built.

"J.J. Johnson is the Charlie Parker of the trombone," says Davis. "He's our Bird. He changed the game for the instrument. He's been a colossal influence on my playing, on my writing, and on my overall approach to the music." Now, Davis is ready to offer a compelling tribute to the NEA Jazz Master with his new release on Smoke Sessions Records, **Say When**.

To pay proper tribute to a legend, an artist - even one as extraordinary as Davis - must do more than pay homage, but must extend that storied legacy, demonstrating its timelessness by offering a musical vision that is immediate and of the present. Davis and his brilliant team of collaborators--trumpeter **Eddie Henderson**, tenor saxophonist **Eric Alexander**, and the sterling rhythm section of **Harold Mabern**, **Nat Reeves** and **Joe Farnsworth**--deliver that substance powerfully and with clear affinity and devotion. With many years of performing together in various contexts and combinations, these six outstanding musicians possess a synergy that is further unified by the radiant spirit of J.J. reflected in the repertoire, all of which is associated with J.J.'s legacy.

Davis is long renowned for his rich sound of sumptuous lyricism, intonation and an impeccable sense of swing - all of which holds true for Henderson and Alexander. Driven and buoyed by the stunning interplay of the rhythm section, powered by Mabern's riveting piano, centered by Reeves' resonance and rolling on Farnsworth's sparkling inventiveness, the sextet shines on six Johnson originals and five more pieces connected with J.J. - including one unexpected surprise.

Testimonials to Steve's luminous talent are filled with superlatives from virtually everyone with whom he's played. Freddie Hubbard ("one of the greatest trombone players in the world"), James Moody ("his solos never cease to amaze me") and Chick Corea ("some of the melodic improvisations ever heard in jazz"), are just three of a veritable who's who of jazz giants - Art Blakey, Jackie McLean, Horace Silver, Benny Golson, Jimmy Heath, Ron Carter, Hank Jones and so many others - who shared those opinions. With well over a dozen albums under his own leadership, Davis' first album for **Smoke Sessions Records** fulfills a long time dream and is another giant step forward for this exceptional artist.

"I've wanted to do this tribute to J.J. Johnson for 20 years but I never felt quite ready," explains Davis. "Something kept telling me, 'Just wait. Just wait.' Then, a year and a half ago, we did the J.J. weekend at Smoke with this sextet and I finally realized it was time. J.J.'s music needs to be played. People need to hear this music. It's just that good."

The great man would be proud.

"Say When" was recorded live in New York at Sear Sound's Studio C on a Sear-Avalon custom console at 96KHz/24bit and mixed to ½" analog tape using a Studer mastering deck. Available in audiophile HD format.

Steve Davis · Say When
Smoke Sessions Records · Release Date: June 9, 2015

Upcoming Releases on Smoke Sessions Records:

July 10: *Heads of State* feat. Gary Bartz, Larry Willis, Buster Williams, and Al Foster

Release Performances: July 24 - 26 @ Smoke Jazz & Supper Club

For more information on **Steve Davis**, please visit SteveDavis.info

For more information on **Smoke Sessions Records**, please visit SmokeSessionsRecords.com

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