



Pepper Adams' Joy Road: An Annotated Discography (Studies in Jazz)

Gary Carner

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Pepper Adams' Joy Road is more than a compendium of sessions and gigs done by the greatest baritone saxophone soloist in history. It's a fascinating overview of Adams' life and times, thanks to colorful interview vignettes, drawn from the author's unpublished conversations with Adams and other musicians. These candid observations from jazz greats about Adams and his colleagues reveal previously unknown, behind-the-scenes drama about legendary recordings made by John Coltrane, Charles Mingus, Thelonious Monk, Dizzy Gillespie, Duke Pearson, Thad Jones, David Amram, Elvin Jones, and many others.

All types of sound material—studio recordings, private tapes and broadcasts, film scores, audience tapes, and even jingles—are listed, and Adams' oeuvre is pushed back from 1956 to 1947, when Adams was 16 years old, before he played baritone saxophone. Because of Carner's access to Adams' estate, just prior to its disposition in 1987, much new discographical material is included, now verified by Adams' date books and correspondence.

Since Adams worked in so many of the great bands of his era, *Pepper Adams' Joy Road* is a refreshing, sometimes irreverent walk through a large swath of jazz history. This work also functions as a nearly complete band discography of the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Orchestra, the most influential big band of its time. Adams was a founding member and stayed with the band until a year before Jones left to relocate in Denmark. Finally, Carner charts the ascent of Adams as an original yet still underappreciated composer, one who wrote 43 unique works, nearly half of them after August, 1977, when he left Jones-Lewis to tour the world as a soloist. *Pepper Adams' Joy Road*, the first book ever published about Pepper Adams, is a companion to the author's forthcoming biography on Adams.

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