

Los Angeles Jazz Scene - March, 2020

Bill Mays
Mays Plays Mays
(No Blooze Music)

Pianist Bill Mays, who is now 76, has had a productive career for decades. He has worked with such notables as Peggy Lee, Sarah Vaughan, Shelly Manne, Gerry Mulligan, Art Pepper, Bud Shank, Sonny Stitt and Phil Woods among many others, and led over 20 albums as a leader.

While one does not think of Bill Mays first as a composer, on *Mays Plays Mays* he shows that he is a talented songwriter. Other than "How Long Has This Been Going On" and a piece written in tribute to him ("Mays In The Mirror"), he composed all of the selections on this CD. Joined by bassist Martin Wind, drummer Matt Wilson and, on three songs apiece, trumpeter-flugelhornist Marvin Stamm and guitarist John Hart, Bill Mays (who occasionally doubles on electric piano) is heard throughout in excellent form. Many of the songs are dedicated to figures in his life including his wife ("Ten, Chelsea Evening"), pianist Mike Wofford ("For Woff"), and a four-song suite for his parents and siblings. A surprise is that he takes effective vocals on two numbers: "Play Song" and "Kalavrita."

The music is swinging, mostly relaxed, and flawlessly played. Several of the numbers (including "Snow Job") deserve to be covered by other artists. This fine set is available from www.billmays.net.

—Scott Yanow