

RAY BLUE #PEOPLE

...documents two compelling lineups fronted by tenor saxophonist Ray Blue: one his deeply swinging working band, the other a special collaboration with the great Kenny Barron on piano. Barron and Blue play duo on Ellington's "In a Sentimental Mood," and their refined chemistry tells you all you need to know. Barron also joins on the title track, "People," by Jule Styne and Bob Merrill, made famous by Barbra Streisand in the '60s in *Funny Girl*. Ray takes it at a medium tempo, citing Eddie Harris as a model. There's pathos in the message — people who need people are the luckiest people in the world — and Ray intends it as such, bringing his expansive tenor sound to bear as he makes music for #PEOPLE, in every sense of the term.

Deeply rooted in the New York jazz community, Ray is also a world traveler and jazz ambassador. He and his wife lived in Berlin from 2002 to 2012, so he's happy to share memories of Paris, St. Petersburg, Beijing, Athens, Istanbul, Ankara, Cape Town, Dar Es Salaam, Libreville and more. This worldly sensibility comes through in his sound, and in songs such as "Cross Continental Spirit" (in a South African Guouma feel) and "Fungii Mama" (a classic calypso by trumpet great Blue Mitchell). In his broad, expressive tenor you can hear the range of Ray's experience. He is, above all, a man of melody, as every Ray Blue release to date has made clear. — **David R. Adler**