

# Wallace Roney

Antoine Roney  
Geri Allen  
Robert Irving III  
Rashaan Carter  
Eric Allen

# JAZZ

- 1 Vater Time 8:52
- 2 Children of the Light 5:22
- 3 Inflorescent
- 4 Fela's Shrine 4:59
- 5 Nia 9:18
- 6 Revolution: Resolution 5:29
- 7 Her Story 5:46
- 8 Stand 10:58
- 9 Un Poco Loco 7:49

Wallace Roney trumpet  
Antoine Roney soprano & tenor saxophones, bass clarinet  
Geri Allen acoustic piano, keyboards (tracks 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9)  
Robert Irving III keyboards, Fender Rhodes (tracks 1, 4, 6 & 8)  
Rashaan Carter bass  
Eric Allen drums, percussion  
DJ Axum (tracks 1 & 4) & Val Jeanty (tracks 5, 6 & 8) – turntables

Produced by Wallace Roney  
Executive Producer: Joe Fields  
Engineered by Manfred Knoop and David Stoller  
Recorded at Knoop Studios, River Edge, New Jersey  
on March 12 & 13, 2007  
Production, recording, mixing engineer: David Stoller  
Mixing assistant: Bram Tobey  
Mastering Engineer: Kevin Blackler  
Photography by R. Andrew Lepley  
Design by Keiji Obata, Littlefield & Co.

Geri Allen appears courtesy of Telarc International  
Visit Mr. Roney's website: [www.wallaceroney.com](http://www.wallaceroney.com)  
Wallace Roney plays a Martin trumpet  
Geri Allen plays Fazioli pianos  
Eric Allen plays Gretsch/Innovation drums, Vic Firth drumsticks and Istanbul cymbals

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Wallace Roney is a blunt, right-to-the-point kind of fellow. The title of his third HighNote release, *Jazz*, couldn't be more concise. It refers to his life's work, his passion, the music of his mentors—Art Blakey, Miles Davis, Tony Williams, more.

Jazz is also a contested word, subject to hybridization, redefinition, too many turf wars to recount. Roney, while embodying the great lineage of jazz trumpet, has always viewed the music expansively. His latest albums are modern in outlook. *Prototype* (HighNote HCD 7116), from 2004, featured the turntables of DJ Logic. *Mystikal* (HighNote HCD 7145), the follow-up, was stamped by the sonic inventions of another DJ, Val Jeanty. On *Jazz* we hear Jeanty pushing the envelope again; DJ Axum, another highly creative turntablist, enters the mix as well. It's apparent that jazz, to Roney, means a vibrant mix of acoustic and electric sound, a shadow-world of complex harmonic color, and of course rhythmic and improvisational fire from a superior band.

Much of the lineup from *Mystikal* reappears on *Jazz*: Pianist Geri Allen, Roney's wife and one of our era's finest instrumentalists, splits the keyboard role with Miles Davis alum Robert Irving III. Antoine Roney, the leader's younger brother and longtime collaborator, plays saxophones and bass clarinet and contributes two fine compositions. Eric Allen, a presence on Roney's albums for many years, returns on drums.

Rashaan Carter, an exceptional 21-year-old bassist from the D.C. area, is the newcomer. Allen and Carter also bring compositions to the table. As Roney puts it, "We're a band, and I wanted everybody's point of view stated."

"Vater Time" leads off the program energetically. The title "has to do with getting ready to play," says Roney, cryptically. "Vater Time knows what it is." He starts the solo rotation on trumpet, switching to a swing feel for the B sections. Irving's bluesy piano solo follows that format as well. But for the tenor solo in between, it's swing all the way.

Antoine's "Children of the Light" begins with a ghostly rubato passage. An off-kilter funk feel erupts, and so does Roney's trumpet, followed by his brother's soprano sax. Though the rhythm is accessible, the harmonies are dense and polychordal, their layered movement enhanced by Allen's shimmering keyboard textures.

"Inflorescent" is a Rashaan Carter composition, lilting and richly harmonized in a straight-eighth feel. Allen is moved to deliver a ravishing piano solo. Her use of both acoustic piano and Rhodes under the trumpet and soprano choruses is an enticing detail.

"Fela's Shrine" is a slow and ominous piece by drummer Eric Allen, with harmonic and melodic input from Roney. The inspiration here is the late Fela Kuti, father of

Afrobeat. Allen traveled to Nigeria in 1977 and played at Fela's Shrine, a legendary venue. "The musicians were so taken with his playing that they invited him to stay and be the house drummer," says Roney. "Eric became one of the great young drummers of the '80s, but he was underrated because he wasn't part of Wynton's clique."

"Nia," written by Antoine Roney for his wife, evokes a dreamy landscape and inspires exceptional forays from the trumpet and soprano sax. "Antoine has a very natural gift," says Roney. "His writing blurs the line between studied and intuitive."

On Roney's "Revolution: Resolution," Jeanty's samples and electronic beats interact with Allen's crushing open hi-hat groove. This is one of two tracks to feature both Allen and Irving on keyboards, creating a more multilayered sound. Trumpet and soprano sax join in a call-and-response motif, and the leader asserts himself ferociously on the open horn.

"Her Story" is a modern jazz waltz by Roney. The trumpet solo is radiant, and there is finely woven agreement between Roney's lines and Allen's expertly chosen chords. Following Antoine's deeply felt tenor statement, Allen ventures forth with a deft combination of lyricism and dense chromaticism.

Roney's dissonant pedal-point arrangement of "Stand," by Sly Stone, recalls his past reworkings of songs by Al Green, the Temptations and others. The intention here

is "to celebrate some of the modern pop songs," just as Bird and others interpreted the pop songs of their day. This take begins with a brash exchange between trumpet and drums—"a nod to what Freddie Hubbard did on 'Straight Life,' but with a Miles vibe on it," Roney clarifies.


*Jazz* concludes, appropriately, with jazz: specifically Bud Powell's "Un Poco Loco." Note that *Mystikal* ended with a Bud Powell tune as well: "I'll Keep Loving You," rendered as a trumpet/piano duet. Roney points to Powell and Monk as two essential pillars of modern jazz, though Powell's writing is less renowned. "I wanted to put Bud's compositions into view, and I shared that desire with Chick Corea," Roney says, recalling his presence on Corea's 1997 supergroup project *Remembering Bud Powell*. "'Un Poco Loco' points to the future," Roney continues. "It's in between an eighth-note and triplet feeling, foreshadowing what would happen with world music. This song and 'Glass Enclosure' are the basis of what the most advanced players are playing today."

So here we have Roney tying it all together: *Jazz* the album, jazz the music, jazz the ever-evolving heritage. With ingredients like that, it's hard to go wrong.

—David R. Adler

David R. Adler writes for *Jazz Times* and many other publications





1 **Vater Time** 8:52  
(W. Roney) (Black and Blue Horn Publishing) SESAC

2 **Children of the Light** 5:22  
(A. Roney) (Eniot Publishing) BMI

3 **Inflorescent** 6:29  
(R. Carter) (R. Carter Publishing) ASCAP

4 **Fela's Shrine** 4:59  
(E. Allen / W. Roney) (Believe It / Black and Blue Horn Publishing) SESAC

5 **Nia** 9:18  
(A. Roney) (Eniot Publishing) BMI

6 **Revolution: Resolution** 5:29  
(W. Roney) (Black and Blue Horn Publishing) SESAC

7 **Her Story** 5:46  
(W. Roney) (Black and Blue Horn Publishing) SESAC

8 **Stand** 10:58  
(S. Stone) (Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp.) BMI

9 **Un Poco Loco** 7:49  
(B. Powell) (EMI Longitude Music) BMI