

Chemistry, a science, reveals how the building blocks of our physical world behave and react to one another. It requires precision, intense study and patience. Theories are tested, experiments conducted, and the world better understands how to live: the safety of our food, the best materials for our infrastructure, the energy sources we use to power travel, communication and the modern world at large. It is a beautiful thing, really. Music too is built on deep knowledge, study, patience and openness. With all of that foundational knowledge and science, our world is full of mystery; music is full of mystery. It is what keeps us going, searching and draws us in. “A tangle of divine inspiration and dust”, as the writer and chemist, Primo Levi wrote.

On *Day By Day*, this wonderful new recording by Cory Weeds featuring David Hazeltine, we hear undeniable musical chemistry. The blend of the nimble, modern touch of Hazeltine and the classic tone of Weeds’ alto are a natural match. Effortless is how it sounds. Both men are studied and accomplished musicians with clear reverence not only for each other, but also the masters of the music. They share the goal of swinging hard and with feeling. All of these elements are the building blocks to a genuine jazz record. What makes *Day By Day* truly special however, is that “thing” that fills our world: the beautiful mystery.

While it may seem surprising that this is only their second recording together, (*It’s Easy To Remember*, released in 2016 on Cellar Live is their first), Weeds and Hazeltine met over a decade ago. They instantly began a friendship, musical and otherwise, that has only strengthened by their travels and countless gigs together. The inside jokes, comparing record collections, road stories, missed flights, nightcaps in hotel bars around the world - all of these things inform the music. Theirs is a real musical dialogue. You might even say their music is a continuation of the conversation.

*Day By Day* is a compelling record, owing much to the strong musical personalities of both Weeds and Hazeltine. In Weeds, you hear an expressive and joyful player who puts feeling and heart into the melodies he plays. While the influence of Cannonball Adderley and Jackie McLean are undeniable, Weeds is his own man on alto. The song, “Sterling Silver Sailboat” written by Weeds’ father, is evidence of a musician who has thought deeply and put careful attention to crafting his own sound. The lyrical melody is lovingly delivered with clarity and passion. There is plenty of fire and strength, of course. The dynamic arrangement by Hazeltine of the 1942 Jimmy Van Heusen song, “Nancy with The Laughing Face”, gives Weeds space to let loose. It is the no nonsense, take-no-prisoners approach that fans of Weeds have come to love and expect.

David Hazeltine is an undeniable modern day master, possessing a nimble touch and effortless command of the jazz language. Leading his own trio, Hazeltine has released over thirty recordings, along with countless credits as a sideman. He has what can only be described as “true jazz feeling”, cultivated by playing with the likes of drum masters Jimmy Cobb, Louis Hayes and Al Foster. Hazeltine’s credits also include holding the piano chair in the bands of saxophone giants Joe Henderson, James Moody, Pepper

Adams and Eddie Harris to name a few. (Could this be another reason for the chemistry with Weeds?) An artful arranger and wonderful composer, Hazeltine's signature sound is stamped on this record. "Relatively Minor", his original composition, has a Cedar Walton like structure that the pianist effortlessly navigates, along with the formidable bassist Ken Lister and drummer Jesse Cahill. Taste, groove, deep swing and harmonic command is why David Hazeltine remains a favorite of musician and listener alike. His playing on this recording is no exception.

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While music may be full of mystery, what comes as no surprise to fans and friends of Cory Weeds is the artistic depth of *Day By Day*. Simply put, he makes things happen. As a saxophonist, club owner, record label owner, producer, presenter, Cory continues to create opportunities for musicians to be heard and for the music to thrive. You hear that generous spirit in his playing. He encourages us to develop a group sound, listen deeply and work together towards the better meant of the music. I believe our world depends on that kind of openness, generosity and joy. We are fortunate that through his music, Cory Weeds is giving us just that.

Sam Taylor

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