

SAVANT
RECORDS INC.

JERRY BERGONZI

EXTRA EXTRA

SHERYL BAILEY

PHIL GRENADIER

HARVIE S

LUTHER GRAY

SAVANT
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- 1. LOUDZEE** 6:28
- 2. EXTRA EXTRA** 5:50
- 3. DOUBLE BILLED** 7:52
- 4. CZECH MATE** 5:25
- 5. THE TRUTH** 6:28
- 6. OBAMA** 6:06
- 7. SEPARATED** 7:05
- 8. THEY KNEW** 4:48

"The Truth" composed by **Harvie S** and published by
Ondine Music, ASCAP

All other compositions by **Jerry Bergonzi**

Tracks 1, 2, 3, 4 & 7 published by Gonz Music, ASCAP

Tracks 6 & 8 published by Gonz Music / Blue Jay
Eleven Music, ASCAP

Boston doesn't get enough credit as a jazz town. From the days of the Storyville club and Cambridge-based Transition label to the star factory that is Berklee College of Music and decades of Mondays with The Fringe, the city stands tall against more celebrated places like Chicago and Detroit.

One big part of that high level of creative output is Jerry Bergonzi. And for this date, his 15th album for Savant since his label debut back in 2006, the saxophonist is featuring his most Bostonian band in recent memory.

Extra Extra came out of a Monday residency Bergonzi has had with his old trumpeter pal Phil Grenadier—appearing on six of his Savant dates, including this one—and drummer Luther Gray. The latter, known more for his avant garde work with Joe Morris, is heard here swinging like Alan Dawson reincarnated in his fourth document with Bergonzi after three shared appearances on Bruce Gertz dates and a self-released 2021 Bergonzi EP.

Occasionally bassist Harvie S would come up from New York for the gig. It was he who suggested guitarist Sheryl Bailey for the album. She completes the Boston connection with her position as the Assistant Chair of Berklee's legendary Guitar Department and this is her second go-around with Bergonzi after both were on a Bob Nieske album in 2021. She is also only the second guitarist on one of Bergonzi's Savant releases since the late John Abercrombie in 2006.

The session took place in Bergonzi's home studio with Harvie S in charge of both recording and mixing. As Bergonzi describes it, "In Harvie's method of recording there are just a few mics that pick up everyone for a more natural sound... He thinks all recordings today sound very produced and his method tries to capture what a listener really hears." Harvie S agrees: "I really feel that I captured Jerry in a great environment and I think this is a very special recording. Also, you always hear Jerry with piano and it's nice that we used guitar and, of course, Sheryl Bailey is one of the greatest."

So here we have the band but what does the band have for us? Seven Bergonzi tunes make up the bulk of the date. "Con Brio" dates all the way back to 1983 and the cooperative super-group Con Brio with Bergonzi, Gertz, Mick Goodrick and Jeff Williams. The title track and "Czech Mate" are heard in their first recordings. "Double Billed" featured on a Bruce Barth album with Bergonzi from 2017 while "Obama", "Separated" and "They Knew", which close the album, come from earlier Bergonzi Savant dates *Three For All* (SCD 2105), *Dog Star* (SCD 2163) and *Shif-*

ting Gears (SCD 2123) respectively. When asked about the set, Bergonzi said, "I picked tunes that I have played before as I knew this would be no rehearsal, just in the moment running down a couple of tunes and wanted to make it user friendly." Those compositions bookend "The Truth" by Harvie S, a rare non-Bergonzi song (not counting standards) in his Savant catalogue. "Harvie suggested it as we needed a tune like that to round out the set," Bergonzi said. "I have known Harvie since I was 18 and always enjoyed his compositions."

"Loudzee" is anything but, spirited not strident, bouncing guitar and prominent ride cymbal setting up the probing theme and solos by Grenadier, the leader and finally Bailey. The slinky melody of "Extra Extra" is a good introduction to the nice hookup between Bergonzi and Bailey (now that's a law firm). "Double Billed" is surprisingly placid at its start with a beautifully lyrical guitar lead until Bergonzi channels the frustration of an accounting snafu in his solo.

Grenadier returns for "Czech Mate", written for trumpeter Lukáš Oravec. Bergonzi toured with him in 2022 and if the tune is any indication, he is a lovely, thoughtful fellow. "The Truth" is the ballad of the set, another quartet number, moving with dignified grace, Bergonzi and Harvie S pensive during their solos. "Obama" is buoyant and optimistic; after all, it was written because Bergonzi thought, "it was a miracle that the United States had elected a Black man as president. Sometimes great things happen." "Separated" is reserved and poignant, leaving the answer of if or when there will be a reunion opaque, the quartet at its most communicative on the outro. Grenadier makes it a quintet for the third time on the closing "They Knew". Whomever they are who knew it first, listeners will now know it too: Bergonzi has convened a fine band for a compelling album, another feather in Boston's tricorn hat.

Let's end with Bailey's thoughts on the experience: "To work with Jerry and study and perform his music is the definition of a dream come true. Everything about him as a musician and human being is about attaining a higher place of consciousness and being and that is continuously inspiring to me."

~ Andrey Henkin

Andrey is a jazz sociologist based in Queens, NY. He maintains the obituary website

JazzPassings.com

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JERRY BERGONZI – tenor saxophone
SHERYL BAILEY – guitar
PHIL GRENADIER – trumpet (tracks 1, 4 & 8)
HARVIE S – bass
LUTHER GRAY – drums

Produced by **Harvie S**

Executive Producer: **Barney Fields**

Recorded by RVS Studio on January 23 & 24, 2023

Recording engineer: **Harvie S**

Mixed by **David Kowalski**

Mastered by **David Darlington**, Bass Hit Studio, New York, NY

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