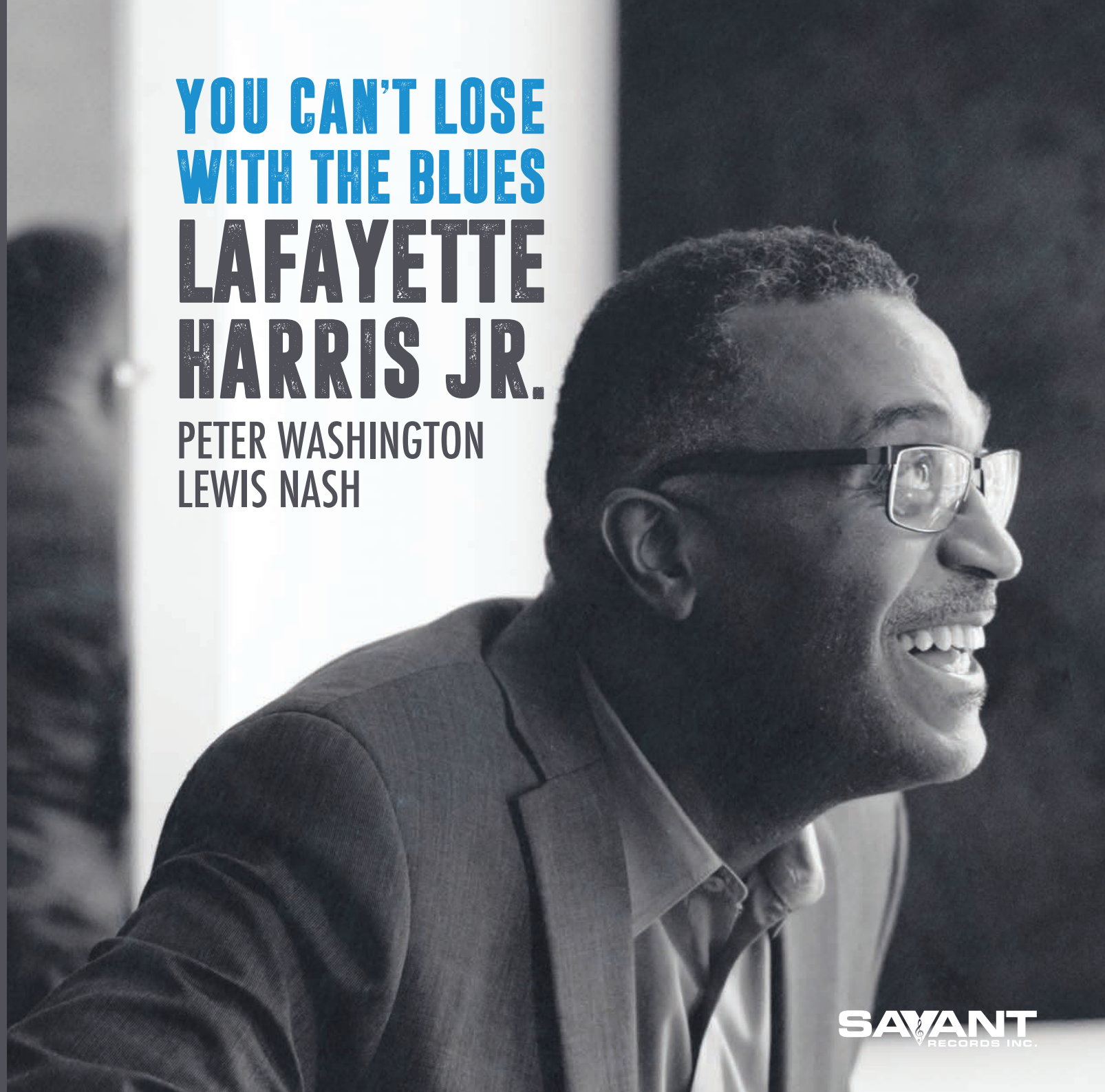


SAVANT
RECORDS INC.

**YOU CAN'T LOSE
WITH THE BLUES
LAFAYETTE
HARRIS JR.**

PETER WASHINGTON
LEWIS NASH



SAVANT
RECORDS INC.



1. HE'S MY GUY 3:26

(D. Raye / G. De Paul) (Leeds Music Corp.) ASCAP

2. I LOVE YOU, YES I DO 4:10

(H. Glover / S. Nix / E. Seiler / S. Marcus / G. Wood) (Ocheri Publishing Corp. / MCA Northern Music / Fort Knox Music / Jewel Music Publ. / Trio Music Co.) ASCAP / BMI

3. BLUES FOR BARRY HARRIS 5:03

(L. Harris Jr.) (Najib Music) SESAC

4. DON'T LET THE SUN CATCH YOU CRYING 4:20

(J. Greene) (Universal Music Corp.) ASCAP

5. EV'RY TIME WE SAY GOODBYE 4:55

(C. Porter) (Chappell Music) ASCAP

6. THINGS AIN'T WHAT THEY USED TO BE 3:28

(M. Ellington / T. Persons) (Tempo Music Inc.) ASCAP

7. LOVE ME IN A SPECIAL WAY 5:33

(E. DeBarge) (Jobete Music Inc.) ASCAP

8. BLOOMDIDO 3:34

(C. Parker) (Atlantic Music) BMI

9. YOU CAN'T LOSE WITH THE BLUES 6:42

(L. Harris Jr.) (Najib Music) SESAC

10. WONDER WHY 5:15

(N. Brodsky / S. Cahn) (Applause and Encore Music) ASCAP

11. PLEASE SEND ME SOMEONE TO LOVE 5:31

(P. Mayfield) (SONY / ATV Songs) BMI

12. THE JUICY BLUES 5:05

(L. Harris Jr.) (Najib Music) SESAC

©© 2019 SAVANT RECORDS, INC. (ALL RIGHTS RESERVED)



You Can't Lose With The Blues is a refreshing treasure of a jazz recording - a piano trio session, with twelve tracks yet, that is dynamic and varied enough to sustain interest for the long haul. Lafayette Harris, Jr. is just the pianist to accomplish this feat. He has an energetic sense of rhythmic vitality, a tasty, full bodied musical approach to the keyboard, and a sensibility drenched in the blues.

Originally from Baltimore, Harris has been a mainstay on the New York, and even world wide, jazz scene for three decades now. His soulful musical background can be said to come from the church, on the one hand, and his immersion with the popular R&B and funk bands of his youth. Also even a touch of ragtime from Baltimorean Eubie Blake can still be heard in his playing. Upon arriving in New York, Harris developed a keen friendship and mentoring relationship with the King Of Boogie Woogie, Sammy Price. He also formally studied with Kenny Barron and Barry Harris, relationships that have been maintained for the long term.

In the years since, Lafayette has developed a long resume that need not be repeated at length. But since he is not a household name, some major mileposts might be mentioned. More than just a listing of credits or a frame of reference for a critic, these aspects of his career have served to inform his style. Lafayette played for years at the Lenox Lounge in Harlem. Like many New York musicians, he worked on Broadway show bands. Significant working relationships in the jazz field include many years in the 1990's as the regular pianist in Max Roach's sophisticated groups; a longtime association backing vocalist Ernestine Anderson who sang both the blues and American popular song book; and finally, ongoing for the last few years he is a member of Houston Person's steady working band.

Lafayette Harris made his first recordings, **Lafayette Is Here** and **Happy Together** (with Melba Moore), in the 1990's for Joe Fields and Muse Records (the predecessor to HighNote/Savant). Leaving the label, in the interim Lafayette formed his own company and self-produced six CDs of fine merit, in the process discovering the many vicissitudes of the music business. Now back recording for an established label, Lafayette is glad that he is with the Fields family once again, as "it feels like coming home".

Also significant is that Houston Person has produced this album. Their idea was to "expand on the language of the blues" and also play some standards with "blues pride inserted in the song form". As Person and Harris both come from a southerner's blues sensibility (as Lafayette puts it), and since each has a firm mastery of the jazz and standard repertory, the collaboration works some magic. And it also doesn't hurt to have great musicians of his generation, bassist Peter Washington, and drummer Lewis Nash to perform as members of the trio. Washington brings a forceful sense of rhythm and lyrically rounded solos to the date, and watch out for the interplay between Nash and Harris beyond just the drum riffs.

The program for the recording reflects all of these influences, as you'll discover tasty versions of some classics and lesser known pop songs, original blues songs, and blues ballads, too.

He's My Guy starts us off, as Houston suggested including a number from the underrated composing team Don Raye and Gene DePaul. Lafayette utilizes the Ernie Wilkins arrangement from the classic Sarah Vaughan recording with Clifford Brown and Paul Quinichette as a tableau for a swinging presentation of piano variations on the song.

Next comes the ballad **I Love You, Yes I Do**, from Bull Moose Jackson in the '40's. Houston played it with Barbara Morrison on her Savant recording (SCD 2136) and now includes it in his regular repertoire on shows with Lafayette. Harris navigates the slow tempo with interesting ideas, and Washington has a lyrical bass solo even in this tempo.

Blues For Barry Harris is just that, a sprightly take off on the Coach's teachings from Bud and Bird. This is an extensive track with room for the bass and drum solos and exchanges.

We get to Louis Jordan and Ray Charles territory with another drink of the blues of **Don't Let The Sun Catch You Crying**. After a down home beginning the pace speeds up and varies a bit while retaining the captivating emotions of the song.

Lafayette says he was thinking maybe of Ray Charles and Betty Carter also when he included **Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye**, but he also gives a nod to all the young singers he's backed on open mic nights. Lafayette also plays the tune on his solo gigs. Here, he leaves out the drums for a soft and furry treatment that mines depth from Cole Porter's 90th Floor.

Ellington is included here with **Things Ain't What They Used To Be**. After the bombast of the opening Dukish intro, Lafayette explores the song in his own way at the piano. Perhaps you can notice tastes of his ragtime influence within.

A popular ballad from the soul group DeBarge comes next, as **Love Me In A Special Way** changes the pace but manages to hold our interest. Lafayette felt that he "needed something with a different palette to round out the sound".

Bloomdido is a gem of the session, as the band radically re-interprets this Charlie Parker line to demonstrate a different way of playing the blues. A furious introduction leads to some menacing and disruptive passages before the piano starts burning the blues. Then the same motifs return to color the drummer's interplay with the piano, and resurface in the final chorus.

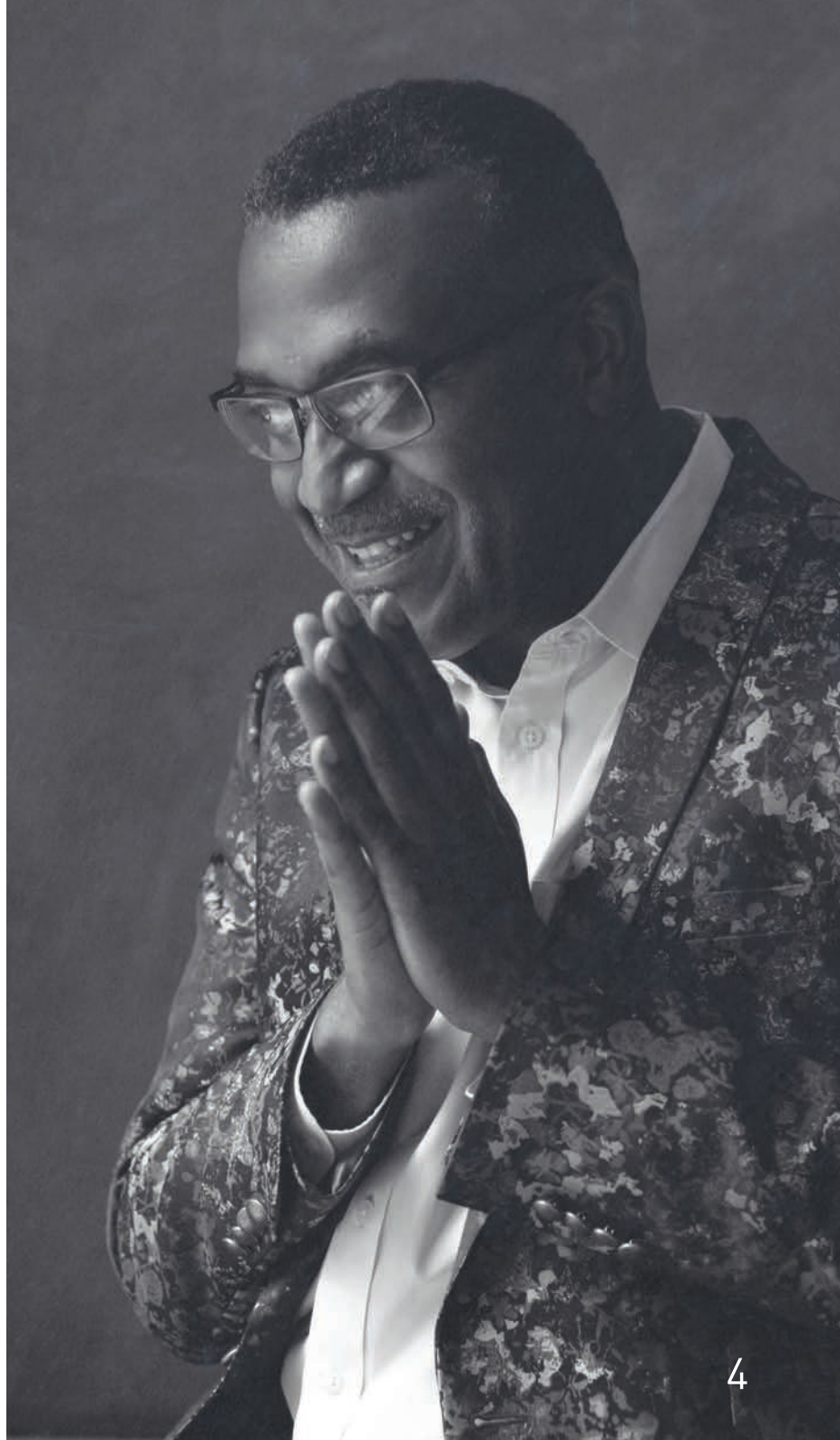
You Can't Lose With The Blues is an original composition that Lafayette wrote for Houston for the HighNote album "The Melody Lingers On" (HCD 7269). Now Lafayette has a turn to lay it out on his own record, with the piano out front. After a softly teasing intro, the proceedings get as down home as can be, tasty and layered with barbeque sauce deep in the groove.


Wonder Why goes back to Vic Damone and the 1950's movie fluff "Rich, Young and Pretty". It's a lesser known standard that Lafayette was introduced to when playing with Ernestine Anderson. Person also includes this tune in his book, so Harris has full exposure to deliver his own lightly swinging version with intriguing solos that show an understanding of the song.

Percy Mayfield's **Please Send Me Someone To Love** deserves a soft solo piano treatment, so that's what Lafayette delivers, maturely conveying both the universal angst and the personal need to have someone to love inherent in the song.

The album closes with another original piece, **The Juicy Blues**, which rollicks with fun, room for bass solo, drummer's input, and some interesting piano fills, that deliver smartly improvisational ideas that, like this entire album, transcend just another tour of the blues.

~ **SID GRIBETZ**
WKCR FM NEW YORK CITY





LAFAYETTE HARRIS JR. — piano
PETER WASHINGTON — bass (except track 11)
LEWIS NASH — drums (except tracks 5 & 11)

Produced by **Houston Person**

Engineered and mixed by **Maureen Sickler**

Recorded at Van Gelder Recording Studio, Englewood Cliffs,
NJ on May 3, 2018

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

Photos by **Gulnara Khamatova**

Design by **İrem Ela Yıldızeli**

©© 2019 SAVANT RECORDS. FOR A FREE CATALOG WRITE SAVANT
RECORDS, INC., 106 WEST 71ST STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10023.
WARNING: UNAUTHORIZED REPRODUCTION OF THIS RECORDING IS
PROHIBITED BY FEDERAL LAW AND SUBJECT TO CRIMINAL PROSECUTION.