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**Artist** :: Calvin Keys  
**Album** :: An Evening With....  
**Year** :: 1994  
**Label** :: LifeForceJazz  
**Review by** :: [Wes Gillespie](#)



Calvin Keys plays a double set recorded live from the Maybeck Recital Hall in Berkeley, California which was later broadcast on KJAZ in Alameda as part of their 'See's Sunday Night' series hosted by Bud Spangler. Once again it is released on the LifeForceJazz Record label, the home of great mainstream jazz music headed by Dawan Muhammad. Joining Calvin on stage is Tim Hauf on bass and Gaylord Birch on drums.

Calvin has been an influential guitarist for many years playing with such notables as Jimmy Smith, Carmen McCrae, Pharoah Saunders, Bobby Hutcherson, Joe Henderson, Ahmad Jamal and Jack McDuff to namedrop just a little and yet as one US jazz DJ writes 'Calvin is one of jazz's best kept secrets'.

This live set could change all that and he chooses a set of standards for his live audience including Miles' 'The Theme' and the incomparable 'All Blues'. He gives us a dazzling display on Kenny Burrell's 'Chitlins Con Carne' and one of the best renditions of 'Invitations' made popular by vocalese Carmen Lundy on her 'Stolen Moments' set, indeed at sixteen and a half minutes long it would have filled a vinyl side on its own many years ago. His chord inversions on this track are typical of the album's menu and the tight rhythm trio add those measured statements with Tim Hauf's bass walking a journey of its own to the elegant

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 Barney Kesseel  
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 Mundell Lowe  
 Herb Ellis  
 George Benson  
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brush strokes of Gaylord Birch, truly a memorable track.

For a guitar trio to function, especially live, I think the role of the guitar has not only to be a melody instrument but also to provide substance to the tracks with resplendent chords engraved into the track and intertwined in such a way that the track has variety and doesn't lose its dynamic shape, this is perfectly demonstrated by Calvin on Randy Weston's 'Hi Fly' with a chorus of lead and one of chord runs which captivate the listener.

I first started listening ( and playing guitar ) in 1962 and a few years later I heard 'Chitlins Con Carne' on a Jimmy Smith album featuring Kenny Burrell and it brings back many happy memories to hear Calvin perform it in a similar ilk to the original, full of lightning riffs and chord inversions.

'Secret Love' was a hit song in the sixties for British girl Kathy Kirby and Calvin let's fly in this uptempo version in a ten minute extravaganza.

The ballad 'I Remember Clifford' by Benny Golson is a late night trip in the Wes Montgomery / Kenny Burrell / Mundell Lowe style with Keys exploring the instruments harmonics and providing a reverent rendition of this classic.

His covers of Miles's 'The Theme' and 'All Blues' are augmented by some clever interplay with the bass.

I am particularly a fan of 'Bus Scene' by Bernard Taylor as it is a Latin bossa and this version is the killer cut out an amazing album of guitar virtuoso, the emphasis on some of the key notes by Keys highlights his harmonic and structural invention.

The classics 'Stella By Starlight' and 'My Funny Valentine' are sure to be crown pleasers on an album which has careful attention to detail and a 'must have' for all 'would-be' jazz guitarists. Here is a role model and the criteria whereby the standards are set.