

**LENA HORNE**  
**We'll Be Together Again**

BLUE NOTE CDP 28974 • 1993, 58:01

Performance ★ ★  
Sound Quality ★ ★ ★ ★

On June 20, 1993, Lena Horne strode to the

stage of Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center to pay tribute to Billy Strayhorn. One might have expected to see an aging legend hint at (but probably fail to recapture) former glory. Perhaps, if she were in particularly good voice, Horne might reclaim a song or two as her own, if only for a night. But after her fiery, impassioned performance, such thoughts seemed absurd. Horne left to thunderous applause, and host Bobby Short said simply "Isn't she just sheer perfection?" No one disagreed.

Like me, others in the audience probably headed straight for the record stores, where they were disappointed to find how poorly Horne's career is documented. She's recorded only fitfully, and few of her albums have captured her brilliance. The trend continues with *We'll Be Together Again*, an indifferently arranged and produced album that clearly grew out of that night's triumph, as a number of the songs are Strayhorn's.

"Maybe," with its propulsive bass and tight rhythm, starts the album off in a forthright, eyes-wide-open manner. More typical, however, is the Stephen Sondheim classic "Old Friend." Just as Horne charges into high gear a slow, incongruous string arrangement swells in the background, bringing the momentum to a halt. Indeed, most of the ballads float about aimlessly while the more propulsive numbers—a terrible duet with unlikely (and unequal) partner Johnny Mathis, a busy "Havin' Myself a Time"—are equally unconvincing.

Only Toots Thielemans on harmonica provides a solo of any note. Otherwise, Horne is bereft of any musical support. She still pulls out a few memorable moments, such as her poignant take on "My Buddy" that closes the album. But anyone who has seen Horne perform knows that after more than a decade between albums, another golden opportunity has been missed.

—Michael Giltz



**WYNTON MARSALIS SEPTET**

**In This House, On This Morning**

COLUMBIA C2K 53220 • 1993, 115:28 (2CDs)

Performance ★ ★ ★ ★  
Sound Quality ★ ★ ★ ★

Wynton Marsalis no longer makes jazz albums; he creates epic concept works. His *Citi Movement* synthesized his New Orleans