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Bennie Maupin – Bio

Bennie Maupin is best known for his atmospheric bass clarinet playing on Miles Davis' classic "Bitches Brew" album, as well as other Miles Davis recordings such as, "Big Fun" "Jack Johnson," and "On the Corner." He was a founding member of Herbie Hancock's seminal band The Headhunters, as well as a performer and composer in Hancock's influential Mwandishi band. Born in 1940, Maupin started playing clarinet, later adding saxophone, flute and, most notably, the bass clarinet to his formidable arsenal of woodwind instruments. Upon moving to New York in 1962, he freelanced with groups led by Marion Brown, Pharoah Saunders, and Chick Corea, and played regularly with Roy Haynes and Horace Silver. He also recorded with McCoy Tyner, Lee Morgan, Freddie Hubbard, Jack DeJohnette, Andrew Hill, Eddie Henderson, and Woody Shaw to name only a few.

Maupin's own discography as a leader includes a well-received recording for ECM Records, "The Jewel in The Lotus" (1974), "Slow Traffic to the Right" (1976), "Moonscapes" both on Mercury Records (1978), and "Driving While Black" on Intuition, (1998). The instrumentation of Maupin's current group The Bennie Maupin Ensemble, harkens back to the tradition of great saxophone-bass-drum trios, such as the group led by Sonny Rollins with Wilbur Ware and Elvin Jones. While echoes of the great John Coltrane can be heard in Maupin's work, one can also discern the influences of Yusef Lateef, Sonny Rollins, and Eric Dolphy, as well as Maupin's contemporaries like Wayne Shorter and the late Joe Henderson. Maupin's approach to his music is intentional and profound, yet alive in the interpretation of the moment. He maintains active performing and teaching careers in Europe, and the US. Bennie Maupin currently resides in the Los Angeles area.

The Bennie Maupin Ensemble came about as a result of Bennie's continuing musical association and friendship with drummer/percussionist Michael Stephans. Internationally renowned bassist Darek Oles was a natural addition because of his open approach to interpretation and improvisation, as well as his masterful bass playing. In early 2003 world class percussionist Munyungo Jackson joined the group, and the Bennie Maupin Ensemble was born.

Penumbra –. Woodwind player Bennie Maupin has recorded with Miles Davis, Herbie Hancock, McCoy Tyner, Lee Morgan, Jack DeJohnette, Andrew Hill, and Eddie Henderson, to name only a few. His highly personal bass clarinet sound has helped define such important jazz albums as Miles Davis' Bitches Brew, Jack Johnson, Big Fun and On the Corner, as well as recordings by Herbie Hancock's Mwandishi band, and the Headhunters. Penumbra is a profound musical statement by an important jazz artist who is at the pinnacle of his artistic powers. Penumbra is dedicated to the memory of Lyle "Spud" Murphy.