



Featured Artist: Red Holloway

CD Title: Coast to Coast

Year: 2003

Record Label: Milestone

Style: Straight-Ahead / Classic

Musicians: Red Holloway (alto & tenor saxophone, vocal); Frank Wess (tenor saxophone); Dr. Lonnie Smith (B-3 organ); Melvin Sparks (guitar); Paul Humphrey (drums)

Review: Red Holloway is recording again in one of the environments that he relishes: that of two saxophonists feeding ideas to each other and spurring one another to ever-rising heights of inspired dialogue. This time, Holloway has teamed with Frank Wess, who is just as accustomed to two-saxophone "battles" and complementary balladeering, even from the 1950's when he played in the Count Basie band with Frank Foster. Add Dr. Lonnie Smith on B-3, Melvin Sparks on guitar and Paul Humphrey on drums, and you've got two hard-swinging, burly saxophone voices backed by a rhythm section with decades of experience in deep groove, whether in swaying after-hours immediacy or a blues shuffle.

It's evident that all of the musicians involved in *Coast to Coast* are reveling in the chance to make the music that they enjoy, and perhaps Holloway's easy-going, good-times personality enhances the atmosphere of the session. From the first track, Holloway's "Still Groovin'," with its backbeated irresistibility, the fun of the recording unfolds, and the empathy between the two saxophonists, good-naturedly taunting, sets the stage for the following seven tracks. Wess' "3 Steps Up Clark" unifies both tenor saxophonists on the opening unison blues theme, complete with slick glissando and slurred, tripping lines, before they split into their own improvisational wails and shouts.

In contrast to the upbeat numbers, Holloway switches to alto sax on the slower and more mellow piece, "Indian Summer," creating a greater contrast as he responds with elaboration to the languorous melody played with characteristic ease by Wess. "Avalon" races, its fast tempo underlying the longer tones of the saxophonists until they choose to burst forth with their own equally paced solos of bent notes and honks and cries and quickened lines. The most unexpected track on *Coast to Coast* occurs when Holloway *sings* the lyrics to Helen Humes' song, "Million Dollar Secret," which breaks listeners into broad smiles with words like: "Get you one around 78,/And you're just 22./Your friends may think you're crazy,/But his will's made out to you./So get yourself an old man/'Cause they really know what to do./They'll give you a whole lot of lovin'/And a whole lot of money too."

All in all, *Coast to Coast* brings together two of the leading saxophonists of their generation, who, even after half a century in the business, maintain the fun of performing together or before an audience--which, after all, keeps them young.

Tracks: Still Groovin', Avalon, 3 Steps Up Clark, Indian Summer, Struttin' with Julie, Water Jug, Million Dollar Secret, Good to Go

Record Label Website: <http://www.fantasyjazz.com>

Reviewed by: [Don Williamson](#)