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EDWARDS

# MATING CALL

TADD **D**AMERON *with*  
JOHN **C**OLTRANE

HANMAN

**RVG**  
REMASTERS



**MATING CALL**

**TADD DAMERON WITH JOHN COLTRANE**

**TADD DAMERON** piano **JOHN COLTRANE** tenor saxophone

**JOHN SIMMONS** bass **PHILLY JOE JONES** drums

**1 MATING CALL 5:31**

**2 GNID 5:03**

**3 SOULTRANE 5:18**

**4 ON A MISTY NIGHT 6:15**

**5 ROMAS 6:48**

**6 SUPER JET 5:50**



*I remember the sessions well, I remember how the musicians wanted to sound, and I remember their reactions to the playbacks.  
Today, I feel strongly that I am their messenger. —RUDY VAN GELDER*

Recorded by RUDY VAN GELDER at Van Gelder Studio, Hackensack, NJ; November 30, 1956. Supervision by BOB WEINSTOCK  
Remastering, 2007—Rudy Van Gelder (Van Gelder Studio, Englewood Cliffs, NJ)  
All transfers were made from the analog master tapes to digital at 24-bit resolution.  
Notes by IRA GITLER

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I was the engineer on the recording sessions and I also made the masters for the original LP issues of these albums. Since the advent of the CD, other people have been making the masters. Mastering is the final step in the process of creating the sound of the finished product. Now, thanks to the folks at the Concord Music Group who have given me the opportunity to remaster these albums, I can present my versions of the music on CD using modern technology. I remember the sessions well, I remember how the musicians wanted to sound, and I remember their reactions to the playbacks. Today, I feel strongly that I am their messenger.

—RUDY VAN GELDER

## MATING CALL REVISITED

In the 1950s the two leading jazz magazines, *Down Beat* (it was spelled as two words then) and *Metronome*, had relatively small record-reviewing staffs. There was less product being released than now, foreign labels were not so numerous, and only some of those made it through to be rated.

Today there are so many reviewers that it is harder to figure out who they are in terms of viewpoint. With only six at *Down Beat*—Dom Cerulli, Leonard Feather, Ralph Gleason, Don Gold, Nat Hentoff, and Jack Tracy—one became familiar with their likes and dislikes and the style with which they presented their opinions. It was a factor in helping you to decide the level of effort in pursuing the possible purchase of any particular album.

Beginning in 1957, *Down Beat* published a book of all the jazz record reviews from the previous year. I have most of them in my collection and went to the 1958 edition to look at the reviews and ratings of 1957 with *Mating Call* in mind. I didn't remember the specific review but I did seem to think that Hentoff wrote it.

Nat's reviews were uniformly well-considered with tastes that took in Armstrong, Eldridge, and Gillespie. He did have one quirk. Often, when dealing with a one-horn and rhythm section format he would write, "Another horn would have helped."

Sure enough, I found his review on page 51. It carried a three and a half star rating with much praise for Dameron's writing but wasn't yet completely sold on Coltrane. He does say that Trane "continues to improve, and this record contains some of his best work" but in his summation notes that "Another horn—a gentler trumpeter say—would have helped complement the not always attractive sound and also would have illuminated the originals more fully in what could have been more substantial ensemble passages."

This is one time I agree with Nat, that another horn would have been appropriate, not because of Coltrane's sound but rather Tadd's writing ability. Dexter Gordon, who said of Dameron: "The romanticist of the whole period—he's a poet." Then, in describing how Tadd helped him polish one of his own tunes, Dexter said, "When he got through with it, he made that thing sound so beautiful. He's got a musical green thumb."

Dameron's ability to write wide voicings made his classic sextets of the 1947-1949 period that played at the Onyx on 52nd Street and the Roost on Broadway sound like larger ensembles.

Actually I believe this date was conceived as a quintet but I can't recall ever knowing who was projected as the other horn player. Putting all of that aside, Trane carries the main solo role with confidence. This was a little more than a month after he had done the second of the two "marathon" sessions with the

Miles Davis Quintet that made it possible for Miles to leave Prestige for Columbia. Trane had been developing his saxophone identity while learning on the stand with Miles's group from the fall of 1955. His first date as a leader wasn't until May of 1957. Beyond that came another learning experience with Monk before returning to Miles in the new sextet and, finally, in 1959 recording *Giant Steps* for Atlantic and stepping out with his own group at the onset of the new decade.

In other words he wasn't yet what he was to become but he was not exactly slouching toward Peoria. And who wouldn't be pumped by the chance to play the music of Tadd Dameron, particularly with the company of Philly Joe Jones, his cohort in the Davis group and an alumnus of Tadd's 1953 nonet; and veteran bassist John Simmons, who played and/or recorded with everyone from Louis Armstrong to Thelonious Monk, and other piano stops along the way with James P. Johnson, Teddy Wilson, Erroll Garner, and Art Tatum. (His daughter is Sue Simmons, who has been an integral part of NBC-TV [Channel 4 in New York] seemingly forever).

From the swaying Caribbean rhythms of "Mating Call" to the airborne swing of the 32-bar "Super Jet" (two 16-bar segments, the second of which has a different ending), there is "Gnid," a title with a backwards spelling of a word Philly Joe, the mimic/linguist/comedian, used to end a favorite saying; this track demonstrates Tadd's aphorism: "It has to swing, sure, but it has to be beautiful." Then there is the soulfully lovely "Soultrane" that is based, in part on "My Old Flame" (the title but not the song was used as the name of a later Coltrane date as a leader for Prestige); the lilting, nostalgic charm of "On a Misty Night," derived from "September in the Rain"; and the slow groove of "Romas," where Trane may not be singing the lyrics of an old blues but his horn is surely talking them.

There are flavorful exchanges between Tadd and Philly on "Mating Call" and "Gnid"; and snappy trades between Trane and Philly on "Super Jet" before Philly gets to work out on his own. If Trane is "talking" on "Romas," Philly's drums converse eloquently in his solo on "Jet."

There is nothing of the flashy technician in Tadd's piano playing. He was more comfortable at slower tempos but always self-deprecating when it came to his solo abilities. "I've been criticized about playing my bass strongly while we have a bass player," he told me, but explained that in Cleveland, when he was working in his older brother's band, they didn't have a bass player and, of necessity, he developed that style. On "Romas" he throws in some Basie-like tinkles.

At the time in the Sixties when I was writing *Jazz Masters of the '40s* (reissued in an updated version in 2001 as *The Masters of Bebop*) Tadd was living around the corner from me. One of the book's chapters is devoted to him and he came by for a taped interview. Concerning his role as a pianist and his heavy bass line he said: "I should really play by myself. I'd like to make a solo album."

When we finished the interview he revealed that was planning to do just that. Then he sat down at the Mason & Hamlin in the living room and played some of the pieces he had already written for the project. I had the tape recorder there. Why didn't I turn it on? Some years after his death in 1965 I learned that he had recorded the solo session but the test pressing had disappeared. Then I really was ready to kick myself for not running a tape that day. We could have been listening to some more of Tadd Dameron's truly beautiful, swinging music.

Be thankful for what we have.

—IRA GITLER  
January 2007

The last time Tadd Dameron appeared on record was on his own *Fontainebleau* (Prestige LP 7037). There were eight pieces in the group and the main effort was the title composition with Tadd's arranging talent coming strongly to the fore. While there are only four men present for this session and arranging is certainly not stressed, Tadd's composing is as potent as ever with such memorable items as "Mating Call," "Soultrane," "Gnid," and "On a Misty Night" far above the usual "originals" that often appear on a recording date.

To play these compositions, the aid of tenorman John Coltrane was enlisted. Trane's tenor answered the mating call of Tadd's music.

Many of you know Tadd through his work for and with Dizzy Gillespie and Sarah Vaughan among others in the Forties, the small group he led in 1948 and the results of these associations which have endured on record. Born in Cleveland in 1917, Tadd was, to me, the arranger of the new movement of the Forties. In his compositions today you can hear the best of the melodic from the Thirties and Forties coupled to the harmonies of the Forties which he was instrumental in forming and utilizing. He has always known how to pick musicians of caliber and has fostered their careers by featuring them. Outstanding examples are Fats Navarro and Allen Eager in 1948 and Clifford Brown in 1953. Here it is the tenor sax of John Coltrane.

John William Coltrane was born in Hamlet, North Carolina on September 23, 1926. From an early age he heard music around the house as his father, a tailor by profession, played several instruments in his spare time. Trane's first instrument was the Eb alto horn which was followed by the clarinet. In high school he moved to the saxophone and later, in Philadelphia, studied at the Granoff Studios and the Ornstein School of Music. In the Quaker City he made his professional debut in 1945 but soon entered the Navy and was stationed eventually with a Navy band in Hawaii through 1946. After his discharge, Trane traveled with the Eddie Vinson band in 1947 and 1948. Then he joined Dizzy Gillespie's big band on alto in 1949. When Diz disbanded early in 1950 to form a small combo,

Trane switched to tenor and remained until 1951. Then it was back to the rhythm and blues trail with Earl Bostic in 1952 and 1953 but in the latter year he left to join Johnny Hodges. The Rabbit was his leader through 1954. It wasn't until he joined Miles Davis's newly formed quintet late in 1955 that Trane began to receive some recognition. From his employment record you can see that he did not appear on the scene full blown. It is rather a matter of dues which he has been paying for a while. The past year with Miles has been invaluable to his development and that growing process has speeded considerably as the year progressed.

Trane's admitted favorites on tenor are Sonny Stitt, Dexter Gordon, Sonny Rollins, and Stan Getz. The first two show up strongest in his style. He sculpts a line in the Stittian manner with personal turns of phrase and his scooping of sustained notes is reminiscent of Dexter Gordon in the mid-Forties. His upper register sound is similar, too, to the way Gordon wailed (literal not colloquial jazz meaning) his higher notes.

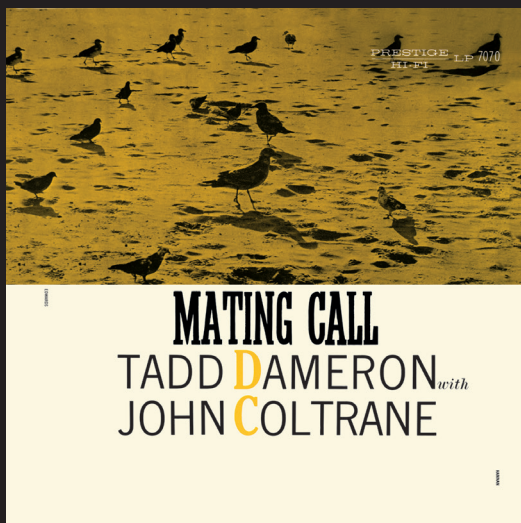
Trane is a searcher who is not afraid to essay new combinations of notes when performing publicly. He listens to what is going on behind him and does not play by rote. As they say in the Theatre, "He reacts." This is why his playing is deep with emotion, conveyed by a sound much like the human voice.

Tadd's intelligent comping, the strength of veteran John Simmons's bass and the brightly burning power of the consistent Philly Joe Jones adds up to the solid sum that is the rhythm section.

Each track has something to offer: the exotic "Mating Call," the aptly named ballad that is "Soultrane," the acrid, tart, stimulating "Gnid," the bright-tempoed "Super Jet," the sad/happy charm of "On a Misty Night," and the creeping funk of the blues "Romas."

— IRA GITLER

These notes appeared on the original album liner.



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All selections composed by Tadd Dameron (Carbaby Music-ASCAP).

**TADD DAMERON** piano  
**JOHN COLTRANE** tenor saxophone  
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Recorded by RUDY VAN GELDER at Van Gelder Studio, Hackensack, NJ;  
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