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earned his place in the rock pantheon 25 years ago, and he's kept his legacy healthy by touring frequently and entering the Hall of Fame occasionally; he won a pair of Grammys in 2004 for his last such studio effort. Time marches on, and *Live+* is a taxing reminder of his platinum-selling 1975 album *Blow By Blow* from a time ago. Recorded during his *Rock & Roll* Top in 2014, the disc finds Beck digging back into his catalog, including some of his earlier works. The band is solid, but too often,

the performances feel more like demonstration than inspiration. Case in point is the awful cover of Sam Cooke's "A Change Is Gonna Come," on which vocalist Jimmy Hall lays overcooked waste on one of the finest Civil Rights anthems, changing lyrics and draining the song of its meaning and soul.

Hall is more at home on spirited, bruising versions of "Rollin' And Tumblin'" and "Going Down," which are both highlights. Beck's shredding on "Loaded" and "Hammerhead" is fun, but he's at his best when he throttles back for more sensitive, melodic playing, such as on "A Day In The Life," where his lead is beautifully nuanced.

The "+" in the album title refers to two new studio tracks tacked on at the end. While they are completely incongruous here, they do offer a glimmer of hope that Beck's next studio album will explore new ground for him. "My Tiled White Floor" is essentially amped-up trip-hop, and it's possible he could take that sound in interesting directions.

For its part, *Live+* settles mostly for generic hard rock and is strictly non-essential Beck.

—Joe Tangari

**Live+:** Loaded; Morning Dew; You Know You Know; Why Give It Away; A Change Is Gonna Come; A Day In The Life; Superstition; Hammerhead; Little Wing; Big Block; Where Were You; Danny Boy; Rollin' And Tumblin'; Going Down; Tribal; My Tiled White Floor. (71:33)

**Personnel:** Jeff Beck, guitar; Jimmy Hall, vocals; Rhonda Smith, bass, vocals; Jonathan Joseph, drums; Nicolas Meier, guitars; Veronica Bellino, drums (15, 16); percussion, vocals, keyboards (16); Ruth Lorenzo, vocals (15).

**Ordering info:** [rhino.com](http://rhino.com)

## Steve Smith and Vital Information NYC Edition

BFM JAZZ

★★★★

Prolific drummer Steve Smith came to fame after replacing Aynsley Dunbar in the San Francisco fusion/prog rock group Journey in the late '70s. Inspired by the ferocious technique of Buddy Rich, he's been somewhat sidelined by the jazz mainstream, yet he's collaborated with many Rich alumni, including saxophonist Steve Marcus, pianist Lee Musiker and saxophonists Andy Fusco and Walt Weiskopf. The latter two feature on this album's standout Rich tracks, "Time Check" and "Willowcrest." Superbly tight horn-guitar work goaded by Smith and lubricated by the Rhodes of Mark Soskin and the pendulum of Baron Browne's bass precedes one of three kit solos on "Viewpoint One," which recalls Ginger Baker's African-inspired double-flam energy of yore.

Though you can't witness it on record, it's easy to imagine Smith cross-sticking and performing as bombastically in the studio as he does onstage. For the live set of this material, he brings snare center stage to play "The Brush Off," written by Valentine to feature Smith's brush artistry. On the CD, Fusco takes it out with scribbly alto reminiscent of Art Pepper; though he has the control of a lead alto man, his impassioned playing has the agreeable whiff of possible chaos. "Willowcrest" grooves like a well-oiled bass drum pedal. "Oleo" is Soskin's nod to his tenure with Sonny Rollins. Herbie Hancock's "Chan's Song" provides ballad oasis—Fusco's piping alto in lovely accord with Valentine's warm tone.

The energized collection closes with tributes to legendary clubs, the Blackhawk (San Francisco) and The Bottom Line (New York City). The first has a "Sidewinder" groove allowing space for Browne to slap; Soskin stretches on "Bottom Line" before a bluesy stomp segues to fleet swing, more deft brush work and a surprise ensemble ending.

—Michael Jackson



mer Mark Ferber's crisp time gives the proceedings a hearty thrust, even during the laid-back "Greasy Over Easy," where Dease's excellent, brisk solo might have benefited from cup mute action to boost the lard. There is a pervading 6/8 feel to the mellow closer "Arches" and elsewhere, tethering the breezy synch of this simpatico sextet and pulling the listener with it.

—Michael Jackson

**All Together Now:** Passages; The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down; Slippery Rock; Big Sky; Border Crossing; Curmudgeon; Uncle Remus; Medicine Man; Greasy Over Easy; Dunes; Arches. (50:27)

**Personnel:** Tom Tallitsch, tenor saxophone; Mike DiRubbo, alto saxophone; Michael Dease, trombone; Brian Charette, piano, organ; Peter Brendler, bass; Mark Ferber, drums.

**Ordering info:** [post-tone.com](http://post-tone.com)

**Viewpoint:** Bemsha Swing; Time Check; The Brush Off; Willowcrest; Viewpoint One; Take Five; Viewpoint Two; Chan's Song (Never Said); Oleo; A Final Viewpoint; The Blackhawk; The Bottom Line. (58:16)

**Personnel:** Steve Smith, drums; Baron Browne, bass; Mark Soskin, piano; Fender Rhodes; Andy Fusco, alto saxophone; Vinny Valentine, guitar; Walt Weiskopf, tenor saxophone (2, 4).

**Ordering info:** [vitalinformation.com](http://vitalinformation.com)

## Tallitsch Other Now

red tenorist Tom Tallitsch is clearly an elite, if his résumé as a teacher in New Jersey, and beyond is anything among other activities, he founded New Jersey Homeschool Bands, has worked with children with disabilities and dancers and choreographers. So the conscious title of his latest album, *All Together Now*, seems a natural fit for Tallitsch's soulful recording.

Frank Zappa and George Duke's "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down"—a Civil War eulogy—Brian Charette's churchy organ and piano—the remaining 11 titles were written by the leader. The anthemic "Big Sky" was born in Montana but for dance company project, founded by Tallitsch's wife; Peter Brendler's urgent bass line suggests the scurrying fugitives in "Border Crossing," as does Dease's mellow solo; Tallitsch's blunt-nosed, garbled sax doesn't sound unduly curmudgeonly on the anonymous track, nor does Michael Dease's mellow solo or the alto of Mike DiRubbo. But all these carry the vibe of battle-scarred triad adversity.

meter and rhythmic buoyancy are hallmarks of Tallitsch's conceptions, and drum-