



Jules Broussard



with news/reviews attached
updated - 2010

From Jazz Improv Magazine



JULES BROUSSARD

...WITH STRINGS ATTACHED — Darling & Kid Records CRB1210. www.broussard.com. *Topsy*; *Close Your Eyes*; *Harlem Nocturne*; *Tin Tin Deo*; *Europa*; *Don Nothin' 'Til You Hear From Me*; *Embraceable You*; *It Had Better Be Tonight (Meglio Stasera)*; *Petite Fleur*; *Smooth Sailing*; *Malibu*; *Make Everybody Happy*

PERSONNEL: Jules Broussard, alto and tenor saxophones; Larry Dunlap, piano; Danny Armstrong, trombone; Ned Boynton, guitar; Seward McCain, bass; Jim Zimmerman, drums; Bill Hampton, guitar; Dewayne Pate, bass; Larry Vann, drums; Danilo Paiz, percussion; Jeremy Cohen, violin, violin solo; Clif Foster, Ellen Gronningen, Lylia Guion, Kayo Miki, Vivian Warkentin — violins; Katherine Johnk, Emily Onderdonk — violas; Nancy Bien, Joseph Herbert — cellos

By Curtis Davenport

Veteran sax man Jules Broussard's résumé is thick with a list of the pop, rock and R&B headliners that he has played with in a career that spans over thirty-five years. Ray Charles, Boz Scaggs, Van Morrison, Carlos Santana and many other big name artists have employed Broussard over the years, either on record, on the road or both. However, as is common with many who make their living in the studio or in touring bands, Broussard's catalog of recordings as a leader is extremely brief. In fact, ...*With Strings Attached*, apparently, is only Broussard's second recording as a leader, the first being an eponymous 1988 fusion date. On this recording, the Louisiana born, San Francisco based Broussard has gone, based on his track record, in a rather unexpected direction; he has delivered a straight-ahead disc, consisting mostly of jazz standards, backed by a full string section.

A professional musician since the age of twelve and now in his early seventies, Broussard decided that it was time to return to some of the music that he has played and loved since his youth. In addition to the string section, Broussard surrounded himself with many of the musical friends that he has made over his long career, including pianist Larry Dunlap, a veteran of Cleo Laine's and Mark Murphy's groups; guitarist Ned Boynton, of the swing group "Hot Club of San Francisco"; trombonist Danny Armstrong, who is a cohort of Broussard's from his days with the vintage swing and jump blues band: "Lavay Smith's Red Hot Skillet Lickers"; bassist Seward McCain, who was a member of one of Vince Guaraldi's later groups; and Bay Area soul/jazz legend Larry Vann on drums. From a group with credentials that cover as many bases as these, you would expect something on the hotly eclectic side, but ...*With Strings Attached* is surprisingly inclined toward the middle of the road. It is an enjoyable listening experience albeit one pitched consistently at a medium to low flame.

The set gets off to a great start with a toe-tapping version of "Topsy", the Eddie Durham warhorse. Dunlap sets it up with a sprightly piano solo before Broussard comes in stating the theme on tenor sax, accompanied by the strings. Broussard's plays both tenor and alto sax on the disc and though he is fine on both, I have a personal preference for his tenor which had a dry, cool sound out of the Stan Getz School. Then trombonist Danny Armstrong comes growling onto the scene in the best of his three appearances on the disc. I would have liked to hear more from Armstrong as he adds a bit of spice to the gumbo each time he plays. Boynton comes next

with a bit of cool guitar that made me hit the internet to find out where I could hear more from him. He is a hidden gem. Another highlight is "Close Your Eyes", featuring Broussard on alto, displaying a smooth, sense of swing; the plucked strings providing cool counterpoint to his melody. Larry Dunlap also served as string arranger and this is his best work on the disc as the strings are truly another instrument here and not just a pretty part of the background. Dunlap also adds more fine piano work and McCain turns in a nice bass solo; this version of a timeworn song is a winner. Broussard pays a nod to his Santana years with "Europa", which is not a surprise, since this song lends itself well to a romantic string drenched arrangement. Broussard acquits himself well on alto, but the star of this track is guest guitarist Bill Hampton, who brings the song back toward its rock roots with a fiery solo.

Broussard sticks close to the melody on most tracks, but his best performance is on "Embraceable You", where he decides to chuck the melody that we know so well and take off into a wonderful improvisational flight and create something new that only makes an occasional nod to the theme; similar to the way James Moody approached "I'm in the Mood for Love", over a half-century ago. The disc closes with two pieces that are memorable, partly for the fact that they are two rarely heard gems from two jazz masters: first is Benny Carter's "Malibu", which is bathed in a full *film noir* setting, featuring a purring Broussard; and Harold Mabern's "Make Everybody Happy", from Mabern's days in the old MJT, which becomes a joyful unison march between Armstrong's trombone and Broussard's tenor. Hampton once again makes that 'bone talk! Kudos here also to guest star Dewayne Pate on electric bass and to Dunlap's soulful string arrangement.

Jules Broussard's ...*With Strings Attached*, is a fine disc from a veteran player who, at an age when many think about retirement, is ready instead to start a fine third act. If you are a fan of the jazz horn plus strings concept, you will find this disc a welcome addition to your collection.



CD

**JULES BROUSSARD:
...WITH STRINGS
ATTACHED**

(Darling & Kid)

Back in the '50s, many jazz soloists grafted string sections onto their music as a way to expand their audiences (see Charlie Parker's *Bird with Strings*). Since then, jazz players have grown more adept at incorporating violins and cellos, either reworking traditional tunes (as with Lee Konitz's 1996 album, *Strings for Holiday*) or experimenting with classical-jazz hybrids (John Surman's recent *The Spaces in Between*). Saxophonist Jules Broussard's latest disc lies closer to the former style, recalling the smooth, sultry work of fellow hornmen Lester Young and Coleman Hawkins. On smoky tracks such as "Harlem Nocturne" and Sidney Bechet's "Petite Fleur," the 30-year San Francisco resident—who's played with Santana, Van Morrison, Boz Scaggs, and Alice Coltrane—unfurls his alto and tenor parts with laconic grace, sliding around Larry Dunlap's gentle piano and Ned Boynton's ebullient guitar. At its best, the 10-part string section, arranged and conducted by violinist Jeremy Cohen, is unobtrusive, offering sly counterpoint on the jaunty "Topsy" and warm buoyancy on "Smooth Sailing." Only occasionally do the strings veer into mushy schmaltz. With this disc, Broussard and his collaborators have concocted a warm, elegant sound that both jazz purists and neophytes can applaud. **B+**

DAN STRACHOTA

*From San Francisco Magazine
January 2008*

From LA Jazz Scene
October 2007

Jules Broussard
With Strings Attached
(Darling & Kid Records)

Veteran altoist and tenor-saxophonist Jules Broussard has been part of the San Francisco jazz scene for over 30 years, playing in jazz, pop, commercial and studio settings. Sometimes he performs with Lavay Smith's Red Hot Skillet Lickers where his big tone and swinging style sound perfectly at home.

With Strings Attached puts Broussard in the spotlight as he is accompanied by two different rhythm sections, pianist Larry Dunlap and a 10-piece string section. Unlike with many jazz with strings dates, the emphasis is not exclusively on ballads and the strings do not weigh down the proceedings. Larry Dunlap's arrangements for the strings accentuate the music, with the violins, violas and cellos helping to bring out the beauty in the songs, even on the more medium-tempo pieces. In addition, violinist Jeremy Cohen gets a couple of solos.

One could certainly imagine Jules Broussard exploring this repertoire without using a string section, for the date includes such swingers as "Topsy," "Harlem Nocturne," "Tin Tin Deo," "Do Nothing Till You Hear From Me" and Arnett Cobb's "Smooth Sailing." The renditions are concise, saying a lot in a relatively brief period of time with Jules Broussard sounding inspired by the opportunity to work with strings.

With Strings Attached is recommended and available from www.broussard.com.

— Scott Yanow

With Strings Attached

Released: 2007

Record Label: Darling & Kid

Album Review

A stalwart of the San Francisco music scene, Jules Broussard is known internationally as a player whose jazz cameo appearances with Alice Coltrane or Carlos Santana, and on the pop-rock side Stoneground, Van Morrison, Art Garfunkel, Johnny Otis and Betty Davis comprise whatever fleeting fame he may have achieved. This project has the alto and tenor (not soprano) saxophonist performing with a small combo complemented by a ten-piece string ensemble. Pianist Larry Dunlap plays a prominent role as a co-conspirator -- his presence is more pronounced in several aspects than the leader in terms of overall group sound. The material is for the most part vintage straight ahead jazz and standards, longtime favorites of Broussard's. What sets these songs apart from other string-laden arrangements behind jazz tunes is that the violins, violas and cellos are not background afterthoughts or syrupy symphonic blankets. Instead the instruments are carefully placed in counterpointed snippet phrases that carry on distinct serve-and-volley conversations with the saxophonist and his band. The concept for the most part works, though perhaps the strings could have been omitted from a few tunes, letting the small band stand alone on occasion. The string charts are generally unobtrusive, quite alluring and sweet. Momentarily sighing or moaning during the ballad "Harlem Nocturne," in a neo-classical chamber mode for Sidney Bechet's "Petite Fleur," nearly gossipy for the easy swingers "Topsy," "Close Your Eyes" and on the basso profundo end for "Smooth Sailing," the strings are a smart and sometimes whimsical aperitif. Broussard knows these classics well, is not overbearing in his melodies or solos, and keeps the proceedings to the point, with perhaps a trace of Charlie Parker or Lester Young creeping into his personal sound. As asides, there are latin inflections, a lush version of Santana's "Europa," and the lesser known Harold Mabern blues swinger "Make Everybody Happy," with the strings pushed back for Broussard, Dunlap and trombonist Danny Armstrong to play a unison line. An interesting, far from overwhelming or sugar coated project, it is one Broussard should be proud of, and one to possibly be heard in concert performance. ~ **Michael G. Nastos, All Music Guide**

From Billboard

From SJ Mercury News
October 2007

CDs: Best Bay Area jazz releases 2007

By Andrew Gilbert
for the Mercury News
11/29/2007

Jules Broussard: "With Strings Attached" (Darling & Kid Records, \$16.98)

New Orleans-born saxophonist Broussard has been a force on the Bay Area jazz scene for so long that he's often taken for granted. But pianist Larry Dunlap, a gifted accompanist and arranger, gives him the star treatment with a dozen string arrangements that provide his lithe alto and burnished tenor with sumptuous but subtle support. It's a genre with many more misses than hits, but Dunlap and Broussard deliver a home run with a fascinating program that includes tunes by Carlos Santana, Sidney Bechet, Arnett Cobb and Harold Mabern.

Prolific sax player to blow through Anderson

Jules Broussard brings his band to Copadouro in Anderson

The variety of styles performed by Jules Broussard can't be restricted to jazz only, though his pedigree for the stuff runs high. He's played with a mixed bag of Ray Charles, Van Morrison, Elvin Bishop, Alice Coltrane, and Santana. So, when asked what style would he play for his June 27-28 performances at Copadouro in Anderson, Broussard looked puzzled before his face brightened and he responded, "I play to the audience. I grew up playing in Louisiana; down there that's all we did." He referred to his recent release of jazz standards, "Jules Broussard . . . With Strings Attached," saying, "That jazz is for the adults . . ."

"This is for the party," he said, tapping eagerly at a CD containing his band's covers of "Kiss" by Prince and "Cruisin'" by Smokey Robinson. Born in Marksville, La. in 1937, Broussard said he grew up in a "very healthy musical environment." He started performing musically with his uncles when he was 12 years old—that was 1949. He said his group played music for both sides of the tracks in Louisiana, including honky tonk, swing and country/western. Broussard said flexibility was necessary to please everybody and especially to get more work, because Louisiana was such a melting pot of music and culture. He said he was inspired to follow the saxophone, because his sax-playing uncle was "the better looking one that the girls followed."

Broussard left Louisiana for the Air Force at age 19 and eventually settled in the Bay Area after a couple years in Chicago. Broussard performed with Ray Charles in 1967; Charles would have been about 35 years old. "I thought Ray was the hip, soulful, and all in between," Broussard said. "It was like getting taught by someone with a Master's degree. What couldn't he do?" Ray Charles' talent spanned rhythm and blues, soul, jazz, and country, he said.

Aside from touring the world with various artists, Broussard said he was most happy with the steady job he had in the 1970s at a club in the Bay Area, called Sweet Water. He spent seven years leading the house band there. "People were always dropping in to play with us," Broussard said. He named Joan Baez, Van Morrison, and the entire Average White Band among musicians that came to play with the group. Broussard talked about the variety of people who came to hear them as well. He said that the television cast of *Battlestar Galactica* regularly flew in on weekends. At Sweet Water, he also made friends with Raymond Randle, Jr., the owner of Copadouro. "We'd sit back and listen to Jules. There was always women and decent conversation. We're doing the same thing here — we're reinventing our youth," Randle said of his plans with the Copadouro and the unfinished club next door.

"I've had fun," Broussard said. "I think of myself as a guy that has enjoyed a pot of beans. I enjoy steak; but, what is life but what you make of it?" Included in the band is vocalist Derek Evans, guitarist Joe Lococo, drummer Marlon Green, bassist Willie Riser, and keyboardist Roscoe Gallo. He and his Bay Area group have worked together for 15 years, and have amassed a bank of about 1,000 songs, Broussard said. They will play four sets on both nights at Copadouro: Friday, June 27, 8 p.m.- 12 a.m. and Saturday, June 28, 9 p.m.-1 a.m. Tickets cost \$35 presale and \$45 at the door. A buffet will be provided. Tickets are available at the Copadouro, 2959 E. Center St., in Anderson. For more information, call 365-9700. Both shows are restricted to ages 21 and over, as beer and wine would be sold. The concert is to be held as a fundraiser with Catholic Charities for the orphanage at Sao Jeronimo in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil, Randle said.

"There are a lot of women and children there with no means to support themselves," he said. "That's why 25 cents of everything I sell in the coffee shop gets donated to them." Randle hopes to open the jazz club in the 49 Club building in July. He expects to have music shows weekly with feature performances monthly.

*From Anderson Valley Post
June 2008*

*by Michael Woodward, Reporter
June 11, 2008*



CONNECTIONS:

Jules Broussard shows off the lineup on Santana's 1974 album, Illuminations. A Rolling Stone magazine review of the album said "Broussard boils on soprano (saxophone)."

*From Recordnet.com
September 2, 2010*

*By Tony Sauro
Record Staff Writer*

The musical heart of Louisiana still beats strongly in Jules Broussard.

“The music was so wonderful when I started playing,” the saxophonist from San Francisco said. “I try to keep some of those principles. I didn’t know how lucky I was growing up in the geographical center of Louisiana. It’s America’s original melting pot musically and culturally. I might even have gotten culturally overexposed.

“I didn’t realize how musically enriched we were. It’s a beautiful thing. I didn’t know you could have an artistic attitude.”

Broussard still doesn’t.

His stylistic flexibility and diverse tastes and skills, richly nurtured in central Louisiana seven decades ago, have enabled him to sustain a full musical life. He’s never had a “real” job.

Broussard and his five-man band play Wednesday at Wine & Roses in Lodi.

“I can tell by the audience,” said Broussard, 73, who performs without any play list from his vast catalog. “I’ve been playing so long, I can look out into the audience and know what the next song will be. I’m something like a homing pigeon. Something like that.”

Since making his home in San Francisco in 1960, Broussard - born in Marksville, he grew up in Alexandria, La. - has collaborated with heavyweights such as Ray Charles, Van Morrison, Boz Scaggs and Carlos Santana. He’s sustained a career as a multifaceted saxophone stylist and band leader comfortable with everything from jazz to blues, rock, country and zydeco.

On how many albums?

“I’m not a good keeper of records,” Broussard said from his San Francisco home. “Somebody on the Internet has it. I met this guy in Milwaukee who said he’s got everything I’ve ever done. Albums, 45s. Everything.”

Broussard has released only four recordings of his own, including 2007’s “With Strings Attached.”

“Maybe I’m too particular,” he said. “That strings album took quite a long time.”

His longevity as an all-purpose sax player relies on a simple, down-home formula.

“It’s the Louisiana influence,” Broussard said. “It’s worked. It’s not complaining. Don’t ever be late. If a guy plays a whole bunch, I play as few things as I can. If he plays just a few things, I play a lot. I’m very lucky. This town’s been good to me.”

That started early. On the day a friend dropped him off in San Francisco en route to Seattle in 1960, Broussard got two jobs (Jack’s and Bop City) - playing from 9 a.m. until 1 a.m. and from 2 to 6 a.m. on weekends - during the city’s then-thriving jazz apex.

“I was quite an exhibitionist,” Broussard said with laugh. “I’d walk up and down the aisles and play bending forward and backward. I was quite entertaining. I knew what it took to please a crowd. I was the only guy in San Francisco doing that. A lot of times, people really do hear with their eyes.

“You never knew who was gonna walk in and see you.”

In 1966, some of Charles’ musicians did. Broussard then spent six months in the R&B-soul legend’s band.

“I loved all Ray’s music and the way he played,” said Broussard, who left Charles’ group in 1967. “It’s the kind of music I grew up with. Country-western, R&B, ballads, ‘Stardust.’ Everything else.

Continued Next Page

“It centered my musical education. All the things I’d touched upon in Louisiana. I got a graduation certificate with the master. If you’ve got this on your résumé, you can go with anyone you want.”

That included Morrison, a Charles acolyte from Belfast, Northern Ireland, with whom Broussard recorded and toured.

He and Jack Schroer, a fellow Morrison sax man, worked with Dr. Hook & the Medicine Show and Art Garfunkel. He also developed productive associations with Scaggs and Santana.

Broussard was a regular at Mill Valley’s Sweetwater Saloon for seven years and still plays weekly gigs in San Francisco’s North Beach (Enrico’s with Lavay Smith) and Fairfax (19 Broadway).

A sax-playing uncle was his youthful role model. Broussard’s parents bought their only child a \$70 saxophone that had belonged to a boy who drowned.

“I had to have a reason,” he said. “I had no brothers or sisters to fight with.”

Broussard couldn’t get any sound out of it until he was told he needed reeds.

“I sounded like a yard full of ducks for a long time,” he said.

Inspired by Louis Jordan, a nun tutored him at Alexandria’s St. James Catholic School. He “graduated” to Earl Bostick and the early R&B grooves of “Night Train” (Jimmy Forrest, 1951) and “Honky Tonk” (Bill Doggett, 1956) and started his first band (The Snuff Dippers) at 16.

His uncles spoke Creole. Blues harmonica player Little Walter Jacobs was his mother’s cousin (Broussard adapted Jacob’s “Juke”). Broussard eagerly soaked in accordion bands, a “little zydeco and even a big country-western orchestra with trumpets and trombones.”

At 19, he joined the Air Force and played in a military band in Anchorage, Alaska. He performed at Alaska’s statehood ceremony in 1959.

Broussard’s influences expanded to include “northern” pathfinders Charlie Parker, Miles Davis and Dizzy Gillespie. After four years, he left the Air Force with a collection of 2,000 records (“we got ‘em for half price”) and a musical vision.

Stops in Waukegan, Ill., and Milwaukee didn’t help focus it.

“People said I had to go to the East or West coast,” Broussard said. “The East Coast was too cold.”

So he hitched that ride to San Francisco.

A father of four with six grandchildren (“and one on the way”), he has been married to his third wife, Carol, for 24 years.

His Louisiana-bred musical legacy is permanent. One thing, though.

“Oh, I guess I wish I’d been an adult in 1940,” Broussard said. “In New York when Charlie Christian, Charlie Parker, Diz and all those guys were putting the music together. If you can look back at life that way, it’s not bad. You have to be responsible, though.”

Contact reporter Tony Sauro at (209) 546-8267 or tsauro@recordnet.com. Visit his blog at recordnet.com/lensblog.