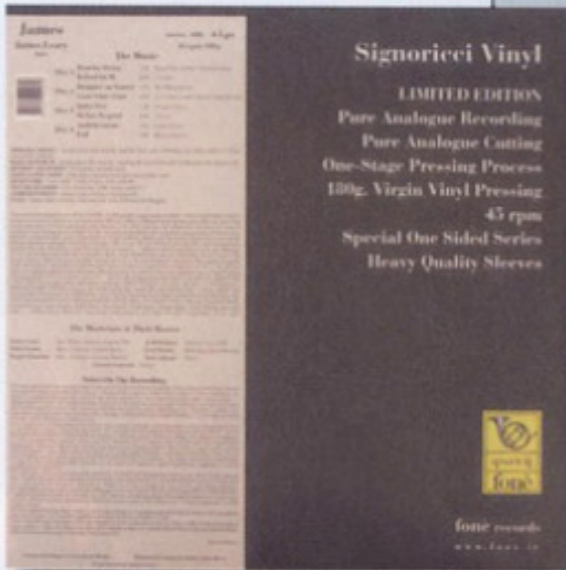


## JAMES LEARY – JAMES, JAMES LEARY'S DOUBLE BASS CHOIR



fonè 006 LP

There are musical instruments that, whilst being eclipsed, spurned as a solo instrument, derided as an accompanying instrument, are living a dire existence. The bigger the “aha effect”, if these children of shadow suddenly appear in the limelight. One of these is the double bass. In classical music, some years ago the conglomerate of eight bassists of Dresden Philharmonics had caused some remarkable excitement; the performances of the “Geatles” (15 bassists) with legend of Klezmer, Giora Feidman, have become cult. And now, this wave has also reached jazz music! Fine!

On “James”, it is notably five double basses jamming straight on and interpreting classics by Thelonious Monk and Wes Montgomery – and who even did not stop at George and Ira Gershwin’s songbook! Who ever might have expressed before that a double bass would not suit as a melody instrument, won’t be capable of a winning majority since this record! The five bassists gathered round James Leary (who had studied with Art Porter at that time and has helped, from Count Basie to Frank Sinatra, everybody who is anybody to have a solid base) are one half each from classical music and from jazz respectively. The closing of ranks of the underdogs is joined by drummer Clayton Cameron; pianist Todd Cochran was allowed to get into the act, too.

On “James”, there is a bowing and picking, a mumbling and murmuring, a purring and burring – it is a pure pleasure! And the giant amongst the strings turns out to be astoundingly agile and offers a high velocity. In Bumpin`On Sunset by Wes Montgomery, it blossoms into a strong rival of the guitar. In Fall by Wayne Shorter, the God of every bassist, Leary convinces with double stops and glissandi; and he vaults, accompanied by saucy pizzicatos, sky-high – in acute danger of plunging from the finger board.

fonè’s audiophile productions (four single sided calibre 45) are truly a masterwork. The pure analogue tube recording chain provides an outstanding sound. The recordings, made with a half-inch Studer, cover the frequency spectrum from 20 Hz to 20 kHz; in the low frequencies it is actually nearly used to full range by the bass which goes down to 41 Hz. Positive side-effect: These frequencies are bearable, even after a long lasting listening session... Herewith, I do confess: I’m a bass lover!