



## Jimmy Heath

### The Thumper (Riverside)

# The Thumper

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**Jimmy Heath**, tenor sax; **Nat Adderley**, cornet; **Wynton Kelly**, piano;  
**Paul Chambers**, bass; **Albert Heath**, drums.

1. For Minors Only (Jimmy Heath) 4:53
2. Who Needs It? (Wynton Kelly) 5:35
3. Don't You Know I Care (Duke Ellington)  
5:02
4. Two Tees (Jimmy Heath) 4:14
5. The Thumper (Jimmy Heath) 4:01
6. New Keep (Jimmy Heath) 4:11
7. For All We Know (Lewis-Coots)
8. I Can Make You Love Me (Russell-DeRose)  
3:27
9. Nice People (Jimmy Heath) 3:52

Produced by ORRIN KEEPNEWS  
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Cover Design by PAUL BACON  
Recording by JACK HIGGINS  
Recorded on September 1, 1959

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It should be immediately evident from this LP that [Jimmy Heath](#) possesses a large handful of attributes of major jazz value: he has a full, deep, compelling sound and a fertile imagination; his playing really swings; and he is a jazz composer of considerable vigor and freshness. And, although his will undoubtedly be a new name to many, Heath is also a thoroughly experienced musician, who has been associated with [Miles Davis](#), Dizzy Gillespie and many other headliners.

Since this is a time in which words like "funky" and "soul" seem to be consistently over-used, it may be dangerous to ring them into a description of the mood and quite a few of the tunes selected for this record (particularly his own *The Thumper* and *For Minors Only*, and the [Wynton Kelly](#) blues, *Who Needs It?*) seem to demand the use of precisely those words.

It is important, therefore, to distinguish between the genuine article and the excess of some who appear to think that anything goes as long as it seems to sound blues-y and church-y. The difference lies in the fact that musicians like Heath and his colleagues here play with "soul" simply because that's the way they feel this music, the way they always have.

Jimmy, having been away from the main jazz scene for some time prior to the Summer of 1959, had expressed concern that he might not be fully "up to date." Quite to the contrary, it would seem that this has enabled him to avoid some of the recent by-ways and turnings and to remain in touch with fundamentals.

I think you'll find further confirmation of the true soulfulness of Jimmy Heath in the way he approaches a ballad. Neither the sexted arrangement of *For All We Know* nor Duke Ellington's *Don't You Know I Care* (played with just rhythm-section backing) is treated in a "pretty" or maudlin way. Both are attacked with real passion and great depth.

Working closely with Jimmy to produce this effect is an extremely impressive group. Cornetist Nat Adderley was operating with the added emotional advantage of having just been re-united with his brother [Cannonball \[Adderley\]](#) in an exciting new band; [Curtis Fuller](#), outstanding among young trombonists, has been featured since mid-1959 with the [Benny Golson - Art Farmer Jazztet](#); both Wynton Kelly and [Paul Chambers](#) are key members of the Miles Davis Group; Albert Heath, regularly [J.J. Johnson](#)'s drummer, has of course special incentive on this album.

Incidentally, the title of one original here, *Two Tees*, is derived from Albert's nickname, "Tootie." And while on the subject, note that *Newkeep* is taken from the Heath's mother's version of the last name of this writer.

There have fairly recently appeared such mightily impressive Philadelphia-raised tenor men as [John Coltrane](#) and Benny Golson. And it is about as certain as anything can be in the unpredictable world of jazz that this first album by Philadelphian Jimmy Heath will very quickly add another name to the list of today's foremost tenor saxes.

--ORRIN KEEPNEWS, from the liner notes.



[Jimmy Heath](#)

**Tenor Saxophone**  
**October 25, 1926 --**

## **Jimmy Heath**

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**"Lucidity and symmetry are the beauties most prominent in Jimmy Heath's tenor-saxophone playing. He is, indeed, one of the most endearing and persuasive jazz masters. "**

**--Fred Bouchard**

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Born in October 1926, **Jimmy Heath** was the first of the Heath brothers to take up music. He first played alto in his high school days, and didn't switch to tenor sax until 1951. He notes two reasons for that move: there seemed more demand in bands for tenor players; and he was finding the affectionate nickname of "Little Bird," which fellow musicians had given him as a compliment, to be more in the nature of a drawback.

Thus Jimmy can be listed (along with [John Coltrane](#) and many others) as among those who moved away from alto to tenor because they felt--in one way or another--the shadow of Charlie Parker across their path. Eventually, though, Heath stayed with tenor for the best of reasons: he found he preferred it!

One of Jimmy's first regular jobs was with the Nat Towles band, working out of Omaha in 1945-46. He returned to Philadelphia to help his brother Percy, who had by this time become interested in music, with his studies. The two studied, practiced and then worked together, and it was also at this time that Jimmy got his first opportunity to write and arrange--for a local big band he formed, with sidemen including Coltrane and [Benny Golson](#).

In 1948, both Jimmy and Percy toured this country and Europe with trumpeter Howard McGhee; the following year both went over to Dizzy Gillespie for a two-year stay, after which they toured extensively with a "Symphony Sid" all-star group ([Miles Davis](#), [J.J. Johnson](#), [Milt Jackson](#), Kenny Clarke). Jimmy has also co-led a group with [Kenny Dorham](#); and in the Summer of 1959, when Miles was briefly without the services of Coltrane, he quickly called for Heath.

In the recent past, Jimmy Heath tunes have been featured and recorded by Miles, Dizzy and Chet Baker, and he is now concentrating to an even greater degree on writing. Two of his compositions appear on Riverside on the [Blue Mitchell](#) album *Blue Soul*, which also marked Jimmy's playing debut on the label.

--ORRIN KEEPNEWS, from the liner notes.

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