

## For A Little Dancin'

Oliver Lake / Christian Weber / Dieter Ulrich | Intakt Records

By [Nic Jones](#)

Alto and soprano sax man [Oliver Lake](#) has been a key member of a trio with bassist [Reggie Workman](#) and drummer [Andrew Cyrille](#) in the past. That band, sometimes with the addition of a pianist, has been responsible for some of this century's most compelling small group jazz. This alto sax-bass-drums trio thus has a lot to live up to, but live up to it they do with *For A Little Dancin'*, and not least because they're a trio whose collective endeavor is shot through with a rarefied level of energy and commitment.



They're no mere copycat of Lake's longstanding trio, either; this is a group which has forged its own identity, regardless of the instrumental lineup. But to discuss the dissimilarities of the two groups is unnecessary, especially when the identity they stamp on Lake's "In This" is so persuasive. Lake's alto sax tone seems less pinched these days, while his lyricism, an aspect of his playing which often doesn't get the attention it deserves, is to the fore over [Christian Weber's](#) bass, which sometimes evokes the spirit of [Charlie Haden](#), and drummer Dieter Ulrich's deft brushes.

"Spots" opens with Weber's eerie arco bass, shadowed by Ulrich, before Lake comes in, working with the kind of intensity that [Sonny Simmons](#) conjures up. Remembering that Lake and Simmons have been honing their craft for decades provides insight into the main reason for their shared depth of musical identity. On this track, the trio mines a seam of energy music that doesn't descend into primal screaming and the result, although brief, indicates how well the members know each other, musically speaking.

By way of highlighting the ground they can cover, "Rollin' Vamp" is both stealthy and measured. Any subtlety this might imply is here, too, as Lake and Ulrich work around Weber's repetitive figure. Again, the results testify how much can happen in the moment; but it's the joy with which the trio goes about its work that lifts the music to another level.

"Backup" closes things out with a mixture of sly wit and the collective understanding which is a mark of the whole set--in turn, marking a high point for potent and informed music making, the like of which is rarely carried off with such grace.

**Track Listing:** Marion Theme; Z Trio; Rollin' Vamp; Art 101; In This; Spring-ing Trio; Spots; For A Little Dancin'; Spelman; Backup.

**Personnel:** Oliver Lake: alto sax; Christian Weber: bass; Dieter Ulrich: drums.

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