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Give the Toronto drummers some (CD reviews) November 7,

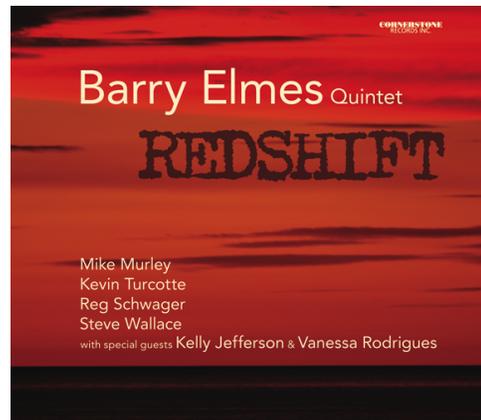
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Redshift (Cornerstone Records)

Barry Elmes Quintet

Redshift is only the fourth CD in 20 years from the Barry Elmes Quintet on the veteran Toronto drummer's own Cornerstone label. In this case, familiarity breeds great ease and connection in playing with one another.

Elmes' group consists of the cream of Toronto's jazz establishment — saxophonist Mike Murley, trumpeter Kevin Turcotte and bassist Steve Wallace have been with him since 1991, while guitarist Reg Schwager at some point replaced the retiring Ed Bickert. With *Redshift*, Elmes wanted to extend his group's sonic palette, and to this end the disc also features Kelly Jefferson adding flute or tenor saxophone on three tracks, as well as organist Vanessa Rodrigues on three tracks.



As a composer, the 59-year-old Elmes remains true to bopping tunes, sometimes with a few drummerly twists (the opener, *Reading Week*, seems to flourish in two grooves at once, Wayne Shorter's *This Is For Albert* has been updated with some 3/4 bars). All of the music is crisply arranged and executed, especially the bright, swinging title track, the shuffling minor-key rhythm change-y kind of tune called *Stumpy* and above all *The Reincarnation of Ratboy*. That tune, another minor-key medium tempo swinger, is a cavalcade of timbres and counterpoint bolstered by flute, muted trumpet and organ. On *The Brush-Off*, which features the jovial sparring of Murley and fellow tenor man Jefferson, Elmes shows off his brushwork prowess — to the extent that I find myself thinking that sweeping as he does is becoming a bit of a lost art among younger drummers.

The disc ends with *Abide With Me*, the hymn by Monk (William Henry, not Thelonious Sphere) that was also covered by Monk (Thelonious Sphere). On it, as on *Ratboy* and the slow, moody tune *Theme For Sterling Hayden*, Rodrigues adds organ colouring, fattening the lean group's sound just a touch. The only question I'd have for Elmes regarding his CD is why he chose not to give Rodrigues, who can burn and then some, some solo space.