



This is not a night at the chicken shack, people.

Which is not to say you, Dear Reader, aren't in for a good time—but point of fact is you're in for an interesting AND hard-groovin' time. But the iconic, old-school funky, BBQ sauce-thick Hammond organ soul jazz style—as exemplified by Brother Jack McDuff and Jimmys Smith and McGriff—is not on the menu this night. Which is no disrespect to the old masters—far from it. Those titans who defined the "Chicken Shack" factor cast such a tall and mighty shadow, their style(s) set a general perception of how a jazz organ group "should" sound. Seriously—say the phrase "jazz organ combo" to many a jazz fan (even the casual one) and his/her mind's eye/ear will conjure the instrumentation organ, saxophone and/or guitar, and drums with That Sound, That (virtually patented) Groove. "I had played a number of years with Lou Donaldson and really worked to dive in and refine that vocabulary as it is such a strong part of the lineage of the Hammond B3," says organist and tonight's master of ceremonies Pat Bianchi.

Make no mistake, Bianchi *knows* that lineage inside 'n' out, as his resume will affirm—he's played not only with Donaldson but Chuck Loeb, Pat Martino, and even contemporary Hammond wizard Joey DeFrancesco. But there's a distinction to valuing a tradition and being limited by it—one of Bianchi's influences is Larry Young, likely the first musician to channel the John Coltrane inspiration/approach to the organ. While Bianchi started with the organ, not the piano, "One of the things I have strived for is to have cats feel like playing with an organ trio can allow for just as many options as playing with a piano-based group, and not only shuffles or boogaloos."

This album testifies that he's attained that goal. While in no danger to lose that groove, *In the Moment* packs not one but a series of wallops, all the while achieving a variety that many *platters du jazz* lack. Let's face it, True Believers—there are too many jazz albums in which one can discern with scary accuracy what an album is going to sound like by the first five minutes of play, by the list of personnel, and/or by the song titles. *In the Moment* leaves those factors in the ozone. Bianchi has crafted a set with dazzling variety to go along with sizzling chops and persuasive swing. "Barracudas" is a mid-tempo piece featuring rock-edged guitar w/ a subtly searing sustain

and stinging tone, turbulent drums, and middle-range organ that starts cool then increases the temperature.

The Willie Nelson tune "Crazy," immortalized by country singer Patsy Cline is an exemplary example of a jazz combo taking a well-known song and literally recasting it, presenting it as a new piece of music. The sultriest of country ballads is taken at a blazing tempo, with sleek and mercurial organ, a suavely blistering guitar solo by Paul Bollenback, some trading fours, and out, all the while maintaining a bit of the melancholy core of the song. The most ambitious track is, by some (or no) coincidence is the most beautiful: "I Want to Talk About You." It has an unassumingly elegant, somewhat baroque-influenced setting, gently palpitating drums, and the guest velvety baritone of Kevin Mahogany. In this view of the night sky, the organ is the star, Mahogany is the starlight. Bianchi's organ is stately, plush, and conveys romantic warmth and wistful (but not mopey) nostalgia. Mahogany's croon evokes Nat "King" Cole (a little) and Johnny Hartman (especially)—in a better world, this song would get radio play and be in hepcat jukeboxes across the land. (Take the hint, Mr./Ms. Programmer!)

Another noteworthy aspect of *In the Moment* is the fullness of the production, a virtual jazz counterpart to the legendary Wall of Sound of Phil Spector. (For non-pop listeners, Spector produced some of the most grand-sounding pop/rock songs in the 1960s, including "You've Lost That Lovin' Feeling" and "Be My Baby.") When queried on this notion, Bianchi asserted, "Phil Spector never crossed my mind here. But I do think some of the 'Wall of Sound' elements simply come from the sonic combinations here, whether it be unison chords with (vibist) Joe Locke and myself or some of the sonic textures Paul Bollenback used. The way I mixed could be a factor. I really try hard to mix in a way that all instruments are up front, like being at a live show in the 1st or 2nd row...and not doing things like having the drums far back in the mix."

There you have it—In The Moment, a jazz album with the vigor and immediacy of a live set conveyed with the gravitas of well-thought, sympathetic production. Don't let me keep you, listen up.

—Mark Keresman



#### **PAT BIANCHI**

organ

#### **PAUL BOLLENBACK**

guitar (tracks 3, 5, 6 & 7)

#### **BYRON LANDHAM**

drums (tracks 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 & 8)

with special guests:

### **PETER BERNSTEIN**

guitar (track 2)

## **CARMEN INTORRE, JR**

drums (tracks 1, 4, 9 & 10)

#### **JOE LOCKE**

vibes (tracks 1, 9 & 10)

### **KEVIN MAHOGANY**

vocal (track 8)

#### **PAT MARTINO**

guitar (track 4)

#### 1. Humpty Dumpty 3:41

(Chick Corea) Songs of Universal ASCAP

#### 2. Blue Gardenia 7:20

(R. Russell / L. Lee) Music Sales Corp. / Warner Bros. Music ASCAP

# 3. **Don't You Worry 'Bout a Thing** 7:31 (Stevie Wonder) Black Bull Music / Jobete Music Co. ASCAP

4. Mr. PM 3:45
(Pat Bianchi) Pat Bianchi Music BMI

#### 5. Barracudas (General Assembly) 7:47

(M. Davis / G. Evans) Jazz Horn Music Corp. / Bopper Spock Suns Music BMI

6. **Crazy** 5:24 (Willia Nolson) Sony / ATV Tree M

(Willie Nelson) Sony / ATV Tree Music ASCAP

## 7. **No Expectations** 6:52

(Pat Bianchi) Pat Bianchi Music BMI

#### 8. I Want to Talk About You 5:42

(Billy Eckstine) Anne Rachel Music Corp. ASCAP

9. **Fall** 7:10

(Wayne Shorter) Miyako Music BMI

10. **Four in One** 4:28

(Thelonious Monk) Thelonious Music Corp. BMI

Produced by Pat Bianchi

**Executive Producer: Barney Fields** 

Recorded at Acoustic Recording Studios, Brooklyn, NY

on August 25 & September 1, 2016 Recording Engineer: Michael Brorby

Mixed by Pat Bianchi

Mastered by David Darlington, Bass Hit Recording

Cover photo by Ronald Weinstock

Additional photography by Roberto Cifarelli (J. Locke), R.R. Jones (P. Martino),

Scott Friedlander (P. Bernstein), Brian McMillen (P. Bianchi),

Vladimir Korobitsyn (K. Mahogany) and R. Andrew Lepley (P. Bollenback & B. Landham).

C. Intorre, Jr. photo courtesy of the artist

Design: Keiji Obata, Littlefield & Company

Peter Bernstein appears courtesy of Smoke Session Records

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