

“Super-Professional” Steve Wilson Taking it to the Next Level, with NPR Live Broadcast, NY Daily News Full-Page Feature, Time Out NY and More –

Live Duo Recording Planned with Lewis Nash; April Dates at Jazz Standard Confirmed for the ‘Steve Wilson Quintet: Special Edition II’

Jazz saxophonist **Steve Wilson**, already one of the most respected and acclaimed musicians in the business, continues to take his career to the next level. His recent visit to the Village Vanguard in New York City yielded a live concert broadcast on **NPR**, a full-page feature in the **NY Daily News** (written by Greg Thomas,) a stellar **Time Out NY** Photo Preview Pick, and more. The consensus appears to be that Steve Wilson is an artist ‘ready for his close-up’ – as Time Out NY praised: *“Whether he’s the leader or a sideman in a given situation, seeing Steve Wilson’s name on a jazz bill is as close to a guarantee of quality as you’ll ever find.”* Please see below for these Vanguard placements and other clippings that have run in recent weeks.



As always, Wilson has a busy schedule in place for the months ahead, and he’s thrilled to confirm a new, live duo album with his long-time colleague **Lewis Nash** – the CD will be recorded at their upcoming March 16th concert at Manchester Craftman’s Guild in Pittsburgh, PA, and will be preceded by a feature interview by Bob Karlovits in the local **Pittsburgh Tribune-Review**. Album release date and other details will be announced soon.

On April 18 – 21, the ‘Steve Wilson Quintet: Special Edition II’ will come to the Jazz Standard in New York City for a series of concerts. Wilson will be joined by an amazing line-up of musicians: **George Cables, Alex Sipiagin, Larry Grenadier, and Ulysses Owens, Jr.** He comments:

This quintet brings together three generations of some of my best friends, and the best musicians on the New York scene. Having been one of the

first-call musicians of choice since the 1960's, George Cables is considered one of the few living grand masters of the piano. Also known for his lasting contributions to the modern jazz repertoire we'll feature some of his compositions. Bassist Larry Grenadier and trumpeter Alex Sipiagin have been two of the most in-demand players since the 1990's. Grenadier is best known for his work with Pat Metheny and Brad Mehldau, and Sipiagin as a leading soloist with The Mingus Big Band and Michael Brecker. Drummer Ulysses Owens, Jr. at 30 years-old has already become everyone's favorite drummer. His buoyant beat and infectious smile gets everyone's toes tapping, fingers snapping, and makes the band's groove deeper. This old friends-new band collaboration is the perfect balance of fire and elegance.

Soon thereafter, Wilson will travel to Norway for an April 25 - 30 stint as artist in residence at a symposium celebrating International Jazz Day. He has been invited by Norway's Contact Committee for Immigrants and the Authorities, along with his Manhattan School of Music colleague, Justin DeCioccio, to contribute as a jazz historian, an established jazz artist and educator. The celebration will allow Norwegian jazz artists, young musicians and various audiences to experience his broad knowledge of jazz and his own work.

In the mean time, Wilson continues his work with **Christian McBride, Maria Schneider and Ryan Truesdell's Gil Evans Centennial Project.**



NY DAILY NEWS

FULL-PAGE INTERVIEW FEATURE by Greg Thomas, 12/3/12
<http://www.nydailynews.com/entertainment/music-arts/saxophonist-steve-wilson-takes-lead-village-vanguard-article-1.1212513>

Steve Wilson is known as a super-professional sideman, but now he takes the lead at the Village Vanguard

Steve Wilson is known as the consummate sideman. Leaders such as Chick Corea, Maria Schneider, Christian McBride, Dave Holland and Buster Williams will speak of his playing and professionalism in glowing terms.

But this week the alto and soprano saxophonist takes the lead at the Village Vanguard with a new, drumless trio. Rounding out the group are pianist Renee Rosnes and bassist Peter Washington. He demurs when I call him the leader of the week long run. "Frankly, I don't consider myself the leader per se," Wilson says. "I think of it as collaborative."

Rosnes hails from Canada and came to New York in the mid-'80s to join the group OTB (Out of the Blue), as did Wilson, taking the chair that Kenny Garrett held.

"I've known and admired Peter since his days with Art Blakey," says Wilson. "Likewise, we've ended up on many dates and recording sessions together."

The Village Vanguard is a shrine to jazz known worldwide. Yet Wilson explains that the drumless format harkens back to a club dearly missed by the New York jazz community: Bradley's.

"Bradley's was mainly a piano room," Wilson says of the venue that was a mainstay for multi generations of jazz musicians on University Place in the Village from 1969-1996. "If you were a young musician and wanted to be around the masters, that was the place to be. There was a certain intimacy to that room."

Likewise, this trio is intimate. "Renee has such a beautiful, elegant touch," says Wilson. "And

Peter's known for his sound, consistency, great groove and some of the most melodic lines of anyone playing."

Wilson, 51, is himself renowned for soulful performance on a bed of flowing, flawless technique. Whether playing first alto in a big band such as the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, or in a smaller ensemble, what's clear to the ears is Wilson's impeccable taste. He blends as needed; when out front as a soloist he never overplays but still impresses with mature exuberance.

Wilson grew in Hampton, V a., and began playing the sax at 12. He was surrounded by neighborhood musical peers, and realized he wanted to play professionally by age 16. His father, whose record collection had classics by artists such as Ahmad Jamal and Miles Davis, would take him to see jazz legends at George Wein's Hampton Jazz Festival.

In the early '80s, he attended Virginia Commonwealth University and was mentored by Doug Richards, who designed the jazz program .

"We'd play early Ellington, but also Frank Foster, and Thad Jones/Mel Lewis," Wilson says. "He brought in the Heath Brothers, Jaki Byard, Sonny Rollins, Elvin Jones, Benny Carter. I had a chance to be in contact with all those people, and that really opened me up in a different way."

Wilson moved to New York to continue his work with elders, not to be a star. The marketing impetus of the "young lions" following in the wake of the Marsalis brothers saw many young artists becoming leaders early, skipping the step of playing in bands led by masters before becoming leaders on record and on the road themselves.

Wilson, rather, modeled himself on artists such as Kenny Barron, Ray Drummond and Victor Lewis. "In the late '80s, every week those guys were playing with somebody, in all kinds of combinations," he says. "You could equate their names with quality; they always gave their best and made every band they were in sound great.

"So I patterned myself after them. I wanted to be able to play in many different situations but to be able to bring my own personality and vision to any situation, and try to make it be as good as it can be."

Now Wilson's passing on those lessons to students at the Manhattan School of Music, the Juilliard Jazz Studies program, SUNY Purchase, and City College.

In addition to music theory, the Manhattanite emphasizes the cultural context of the music, so students understand the rich history and lineage involved, and essential elements such as blues, swing and 4/4 time.

Professionalism is another of his key points of mentorship. "The stage is sacred," Wilson says.

"People don't really care how bad your reeds are, or what you had to go through to get to the gig, or problems you might be having with the business. When you get to that stage, you make the best music that you can to connect with the music, the musicians, and the people."



NPR MUSIC – Live Broadcast of Village Vanguard concert, 12/5/12

<http://www.npr.org/event/music/166127626/wilson-rosnes-washington-live-at-the-village-vanguard>



TIME OUT NY – Color Photo Critic's Pick

12/12 <http://www.timeout.com/newyork/music/steve-wilson-trio>

***Time Out* says: Whether he's the leader or a sideman in a given situation, seeing Steve Wilson's name on a jazz bill is as close to a guarantee of quality as you'll ever find. Like so many sax greats before him have done, Wilson hits the Vanguard with a trio—but there's a catch. He's working with pianist Renee Rosnes and bassist Peter Washington, no drums allowed. Expect chamber jazz of the most soulful sort.**

Here's a story re Steve Wilson's recent performance in Gainesville.



GAINESVILLE SUN - Interview feature,

1/25/13, by Bill Dean

<http://www.gainesville.com/article/20130125/ENT/130129772?tc=cr>

A year ago, after years of playing and recording with the likes of Lionel Hampton, Chick Corea, George Duke and Dianne Reeves on more than 100 records, jazz saxophonist Steve Wilson headlined a six-night stand at a New York club to celebrate his 50th birthday.

The auspiciousness of that occasion — in which he appeared with such guest performers as bassist Christian McBride, pianist Mulgrew Miller and drummer Jeff “Tain” Watts in a different band every night — had The Wall Street Journal describe Wilson as “essential to [New York City’s] jazz landscape.”

Since that week-long run at New York’s Jazz Standard, Wilson has presented his “Bird with Strings” project at two major jazz festivals, and premiered a three-suite work written for him by New York conductor/arranger David O’Rourke called “Journey to Wilsonia,” which had the alto saxophonist playing with an 18-piece orchestra of classical musicians.

Tonight, Wilson brings his quartet of seasoned players, Wilsonian’s Grain, to University Auditorium for a performance at 7:30 p.m. While the saxophonist also leads a drummerless trio that recently played five nights at New York’s Village Vanguard, tonight’s performance with his quartet of different musicians will have him reveling in a format that allows him and the others plenty of room to expand creatively.

“The Wilsonian’s Grain band is probably my most adventurous, or some people might want to say ‘cutting edge,’ though I don’t necessarily think of it that way, but more expansive creatively,” Wilson says in a phone call from New York.

The quartet — which also features pianist Orrin Evans, bassist Ugonna Okegwo and drummer Bill Stewart — excels in spontaneity and remains flexible in both material and approach, relying heavily on originals and on keeping them fresh.

“This group is very spontaneous in terms of what we do with our tunes; we treat a lot of our tunes like sketches, and so we don’t necessarily play the same exact way every time we play,” he says.

“So it’s very flexible in that way. We just totally listen to each other, and feel like we’re just free to try anything.”

Along with originals by Wilson and the others, the group also draws on arrangements of a couple of Thelonius Monk tunes and a rendition of “Perdido,” which was popularized by Duke Ellington and recorded by acts as diverse as Charlie Parker, Sarah Vaughan, Dave Brubeck and Quincy Jones.

“But, because everyone [in Wilsonian’s Grain] is such a great composer ... I like for the guys to bring in material as well as my own material, because we seem to be able to tap into different zones, and it leaves us a lot of freedom to explore the music.”

A native of Hampton, Va., Wilson played in a variety of bands before studying at Virginia Commonwealth University, where he became steeped in the early traditions of Jelly Roll Morton, Louis Armstrong and Count Basie, and especially influenced by the sound of Ellington’s great alto saxophonist, Johnny Hodges. “Of course, I listened to Charlie Parker, John Coltrane and Cannonball Adderley ... and those guys are my idols,” Wilson says. “But when I discovered Johnny Hodges and just the beauty of his sound and his voice, and his place in the legacy, I think that’s what really made me focus in on that direction.”

Wilson moved to New York City in 1987 and built a resumé in the nation’s most important jazz world that allowed him to become one of the Big Apple’s most-sought-after sidemen, or as The New York Times put it, “among the best New York jazz has to offer.”

When not working with one of his own groups, and recording and performing with others, Wilson teaches at The Juilliard School and other schools, and remains busy in a scene that embraces him not only as one of their own but now as one of their most accomplished and revered.

And Wilson reveres the New York scene right back.

“The music is always developing, it’s always evolving and there are always great young musicians with new, different, dynamic ideas as well as the great masters who are still very active and creative, people like Kenny Barron, Buster Williams, Ron Carter,” he says about New York.

“It’s still a great, dynamic place to be as an artist because there’s always so much going on.”

Wilson earned saturation media coverage for his 50th Birthday celebration at New York's Jazz Standard. He featured six different bands over six nights, and each set during the birthday week saw lines out the door. The diverse shows each reflected a different stage of Wilson's evolution into what **NPR** describes as ***"one of the finest saxophonists in the business."***

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

NY CULTURE - FEBRUARY 7, 2011 - By LARRY BLUMENFELD

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703960804576119950902333990.html?mod=WSJ_NY_Culture_LEFTTopStories

2013 will be another exciting year for Steve Wilson, with his own projects as well as working with his favorite bandleaders.

At <http://www.stevewilsonmusic.com/>, visitors can get updates, sample new tunes and see performance footage. The site, part of the Jazz Corner family, also includes a streaming audio player, details of Wilson's numerous band configurations, and more.

For more information about Steve Wilson, or to set up an interview, please contact SethCohenPR@earthlink.net.