



Players >

# BOB MCCHESENEY

## Stepping into the Spotlight

TODD TYLER

As a top studio player, whose playing appears on a number of film soundtracks and pop albums, the accomplished trombonist Bob McChesney belongs to that rare group of Los Angeles-based musicians whose sound has literally gone global. McChesney's extensive, diverse discography includes appearances on albums by Ray Charles, Daft Punk and Arturo Sandoval, as well as the *Rush Hour 2* soundtrack. As of this spring though, McChesney ascends to a new level of visibility and personal vision with his album *Chez Sez*.

Made and conceptualized with pianist-organist Larry Goldings (also a Los Angeleno now), alongside an ace group featuring drummer Bill Stewart, bassist Darek Oles and tenor saxophonist Bob Mintzer, *Chez Sez* serves as an impressive mission statement for an artist finally emerging as a leader. The set boasts striking, technically charged but swinging trombone solos, plus smart charts that retooled standards. McChesney has definitely stepped into the spotlight now—after hiding in plain sight for decades.

The Baltimore native, who has been based in Los Angeles since 1979, sought out Goldings' assistance for the album. "I figured it would be tough to do this myself," McChesney explained. "Larry helped me visualize the whole thing. I was going to do this [album], but I wanted somebody else's input on it, and I thought he'd be the perfect guy to do it."

Bob Mintzer plays tenor sax on five of the 11 tunes, including the title track, which is a McChesney original, and "This Thing," the trombonist's contrafact based on Cole Porter's 1929 composition "What Is This Thing Called Love?"

"Bob McChesney is one of the best trombonists I know," Mintzer said. "He has an unusual take on writing contrafacts on standards, which are challenging to play and amazingly colorful to listen to."

McChesney's voice as a trombonist is clear-burning and smooth. It's something he has diligently worked on since childhood: "I love playing. That's all I really wanted to do in my life." But when it came time to go to college, he recalled that he was "on the fence, thinking, 'Jeez, I don't know if I can make it with music.' But when I graduated, I

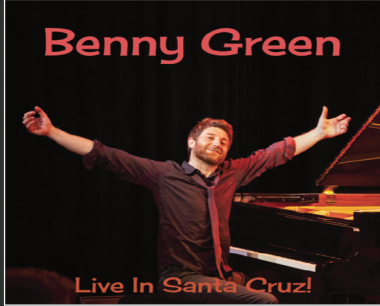
was really looking for a music gig." That first notable gig was the Tommy Dorsey band, but the road life fairly quickly wore on McChesney. His college friends urged him to head to Los Angeles. "When you're young, you're just trying to find any work at all," he said. "Out in L.A., that leads to doing sessions. Of course, my heart has always been in soloing. I've worked really hard at that."

One of McChesney's claims to fame is his mastery of the "doodle-tonguing" technique on trombone, which enables his crisp, rapid-fire playing, and is the subject of a well-known book he penned, *Doodle Studies and Etudes*. His involvement with the technique goes back to childhood: "I was tonguing and articulating on the trombone like this from an age where I can't even remember how or what I was doing. Years later, when I got out of college, somebody said, 'What is that?' I wrote a book and sell those all the time, on how to articulate. I didn't invent it. Carl Fontana did it. There are even writings of trombonists back in the late 1800s using it on certain things. It's a way of playing really smooth and fast."

In his formative years, McChesney wasn't necessarily fixated on listening to the work of other trombonists. "I was more obsessed with Freddie Hubbard, with trumpet players, sax players and guitar players," he said. "That's common with a lot of jazz musicians: They love their instrument, but they get inspiration from outside of it."

McChesney's only other release as a leader came in 2000, when he recorded a set of songs by his sometimes employer—and great admirer—Steve Allen. *Chez Sez*, McChesney's truer and more personal project as a leader, has been long in the brewing stage, and he is eager to keep moving ahead. He recently launched a Kickstarter campaign for the latter.

At this point in his life and career, he is free to focus his energies on his own pursuits. "Things aren't such a struggle to stay alive, so I have more time to spend on my music," he said. "The kids have moved [out], you get a little more established in the studios, and there is not this angst. Also, as you get older, you feel like, 'Hey, I want to make statement.' I plan on doing something else pretty soon. It won't be 10 years. It will be a year." —Josef Woodard

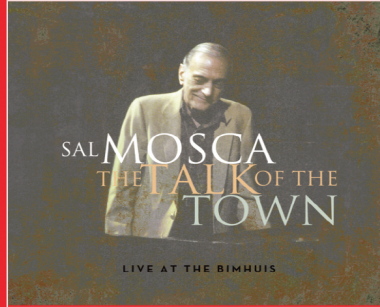


## BENNY GREEN

### LIVE IN SANTA CRUZ!

SSC 1401 - IN STORES NOW

There are places where the vibe is right, the crowd is always involved and management is friendly. The Kuumbwa Jazz Center in Santa Cruz, California is one of these places. Returning to the site where he recorded a live album on his 30th birthday, Green recorded *Live In Santa Cruz!* to mark both the 20th Anniversary of that gig and his 50th birthday. The night and the performance were magical, as the trio featuring bassist David Wong and drummer Kenny Washington lit up Kuumbwa with a program of all original Green compositions.



## SAL MOSCA

### THE TALK OF THE TOWN

SSC 1317 - IN STORES NOW

Some artists fly under the radar, doing their work in their own time, only allowing true aficionados or lucky, open-eared listeners into their world. Pianist Sal Mosca was definitely one of those, a master musician who perfected his craft and whose work has gone mostly unnoticed, until recently. We are proud to present a wonderful document and a true testament to the extraordinary talents of the great Sal Mosca, a live recording spanning two discs entitled *The Talk of the Town*, taken from a performance on November 14, 1992 at the highly regarded Bimhuis in Amsterdam.



itunes.com/BennyGreen  
itunes.com/SalMosca  
www.sunmysiderecords.com

