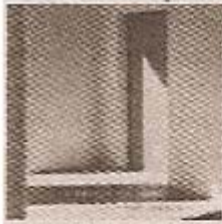


All About Jazz, September 2007



Rob Ryndak
A Reason To Smile
Pacific Coast Jazz
by George Harris

Chicago-based pianist Rob Ryndak has put out his fourth recording as a leader, *A Reason To Smile*, and the collection of originals on this release is quite engaging and alluring. Light and upbeat, the songs have an uncluttered feel to them, and there is enough variety between each composition to keep the interest of any listener for numerous helpings. The music also serves a secondary purpose, as it reflects Ryndak's confrontation and ultimate acceptance of his first wife succumbing to breast cancer. Mixing funk, jazz and Brazilian grooves freely and easily, Ryndak's warm piano comping leads the band through songs as funky as "Paradoxes" and as sophisticated and subtle as "Clare's Arrival." Giving plenty of solo space to his band, he let's Joe Saia's Chet Bakerish flugelhorn ooze through the lovely "Just Live." The cha-cha-cha simmers through the flute and flugelhorn lead on "The Gift of Courage," and the Latinized beat of "E.R." is a perfect foundation for understated soloing by tenor saxophonist Steve Wunder and guitarist Sasha Brusin. The whole album has a feel of early Steely Dan, minus Fagan's nasally vocals. *A Reason To Smile* will certainly give you one and is definitely worth checking out for jazz that goes down easy, but still gets down.

Pacific Coast Jazz on the web: www.pacificcoastjazz.com.

Track Listing: Reason To Smile/ Lea's Joy/ Jadey/ Gift of Courage/ Larimar/ Blues for Emily/ E.R./ Clare's Arrival/ Just Live/ Paradoxes

Personnel: Rob Ryndak- piano, congas; Andrew Sole- drums; John Falstrom, Jamie Martinez- bass; Sasha Brusin- guitar; Joe Saia- flugelhorn, trumpet; Steve Wunder- tenor, alto sax; Greg Fishman- tenor sax, flute; Ruben Alvarez, Carlos Cornier- percussion