

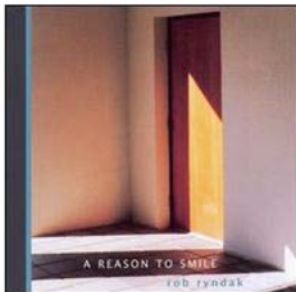




A Reason to Smile

Rob Ryndak

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Artist

[Rob Ryndak](#)

Album

A Reason to Smile

Rating

★★★★☆

Release Date

Sep 18, 2007

Recording Date

Mar 24, 2007, Mar 31, 2007

Label

Pacific Coast Jazz

Genre

Jazz

Styles

Smooth Jazz
Latin Jazz
Jazz-Pop
Crossover Jazz

Moods

Themes

Review

by Jonathan Widran

On his fourth release as a leader, Chicago-based pianist Rob Ryndak continues to explore an exciting mix of pop, soul, Brazilian, and other world influences in an ongoing celebration of life and rebirth in the years after he lost his first wife, Barbara, to breast cancer. The first three tracks perfectly summarize the great diversity and wide range of dynamics at work here. Led by **Joe Saia's** trumpet, Ryndak's cabasa, and **Greg Fishman's** sensuous tenor sax, the title track is a cool, laid-back, and jazzy bossa-lite jaunt. The exotic rhythms get deeper on the densely percussive, minor chord-driven "Lea's Joy," a hypnotic piece patterned on Ghana's akom music and highlighted by Ryndak's steady piano lines and Saia's bright flügelhorn solo. "Jadey" is the name of Ryndak's second wife, and it's clear from the shuffling funk and vibrant bass groove, Saia's trumpet, **Steve Wunder's** punchy sax, and **Carter Luke's** simmering Hammond B-3 that the marriage isn't perfect but it's still a source of great joy and excitement. The fun part of Ryndak's music is that it's hard to categorize from track to track -- there are the cha-cha rhythms of "The Gift of Courage," the dark strutting jazz-blues of "Blues for Emily," and the tasty Latin pop feelings of "Clare's Arrival," driven by **Fishman's** beautiful flute melody. Ryndak holds everything together with dynamic piano voicings that are sometimes restrained and supportive behind other instruments, and sometimes right out front. Through all the ups and downs in his life and career, it's clear that he knows the value of ensembles and letting his fellow musicians shine. That unselfish approach is *A Reason to Smile* as well.

Tracks

	Title	Composer	Time
1	A Reason to Smile	Ryndak	3:49
2	Lea's Joy	Ryndak	5:42
3	Jadey	Ryndak	5:18
4	The Gift of Courage	Ryndak	4:52
5	Larimar	Ryndak	5:14
6	Blues for Emily	Ryndak	5:57
7	E.R.	Ryndak	5:36
8	Clare's Arrival	Ryndak	5:07
9	Just Live	Ryndak	4:05
10	Paradoxes	Ryndak	4:42

Releases

Year	Type	Label	Catalog #
2007	CD	Pacific Coast Jazz	67210