

Bob DeVos “A Brilliant, Knowing Bebop Player – A Living Jazz Legend” – All About Jazz

Acclaimed guitarist, composer and bandleader Bob DeVos has enjoyed over 50 years as an in-demand player. With long, blues-drenched melodic lines and a horn-like approach, he has a signature style of groove and sophistication. From solo to big band, Bob is a modern player with strong traditional roots, equally at home with straight-ahead jazz, blues, Rhythm & Blues, funk, Latin, and more.

A master with a full, warm sound, in his formative years Bob toured and recorded with the giants of organ jazz—Trudy Pitts, Richard “Groove” Holmes & Sonny Stitt, Jimmy McGriff & Hank Crawford, and Charles “The Mighty Burner” Earland’s greatest band. Bob went on to perform with a Who’s Who in and out of the organ genre: “I feel fortunate to have played with these larger-than-life masters; each had a strong identity. I gained profound insights into the music, how to be a musician, and finding my own voice.”

Beginning with *Breaking The Ice* (produced by Charles Earland) DeVos’ CDs as a leader for HighNote/Savant and other labels have earned rave reviews and many stars in Downbeat and throughout the jazz media, were among the top five on JazzWeek’s National Airplay Chart for many months, and appeared on many yearly top CDs lists. Longtime collaborator Eric Alexander appears on Bob’s *Shifting Sands* and *Playing for Keeps*. His most current CDs are the hip *Shadow Box* featuring Ralph Bowen and the lustrous *Six String Solos*.

DeVos currently leads his own groups and collaborates with vibraphonist Behn Gillece and with pianist Andy LaVerne. Bob was the musical director and guitarist for the famed concert, *An Organ Summit Supreme*, reuniting with Jimmy McGriff, Dr. Lonnie Smith and Trudy Pitts and tenor legends David “Fathead” Newman and Houston Person.

Bob studied jazz as a teenager with Harry Leahy and the legendary Dennis Sandole. When Sandole sent his students to replace Pat Martino in Trudy Pitts’ Trio, Bob got the gig. Bob deepened his compositional and harmonic approach playing with the Teo Macero Nonet, Gerry Niewood’s Timepiece with Dave Samuels and as a composer/player for the forward-thinking Ron McClure Quartet. He studied classical composition with Edgar Grana, and received a 1996 NJ Council of the Arts Grant in composition. “My composing is the structural side of my improvising. I strive to develop a musical idea thematically in both writing and playing.”

Bob has a far-reaching discography as a sideman, including over 100 studio recordings. He has a strong following for his innovative work with, among many others, Pepper Adams, Joey DeFrancesco, Billy Drummond, Don Friedman, Billy Hart, Etta Jones, Steve LaSpina, Mike LeDonne, Hendrik Meurkens, Etta Jones, Jack McDuff, Pat Martino, Adam Nussbaum, Irene Reid, Dr. Lonnie Smith, Stanley Turrentine and many more. As a young musician he played with Screamin’ Jay Hawkins & recorded for Frank Sinatra and Gladys Knight.

In recent years, Bob has performed at the Kennedy Center, The Kimmel Center, The NJ State Theater, The Blue Note, Iridium, The Jazz Bakery, The Kitano, SMOKE, Chris’ Jazz Cafe, the Smithsonian, the San Diego Art Museum, Jazz Forum Arts, Birdland, Jazzmobile, Smalls, Mezzrow and numerous festivals in the US and worldwide, including JVC Jazz Festivals and The San Francisco Jazz Festival.

An innovative, generous, teacher, Bob has done extensive work in jazz clinics worldwide, has been on the faculties of William Paterson and Lehigh University, and is a past artist-in-residence at Newark Arts High. He currently teaches privately both on and off line.

“Powerhouse guitarist Bob DeVos exemplifies what to look for in a mainstream jazz artist: a rich, round tone around a glowing center, a profound rhythmic capacity, a hearty swing, a creative thinker who seeks the best notes for a given situation and executes them seemingly without effort. He presents top-rate material in a way that is both inventive and accessible. He digs deep into his distinctive, prodigious style which is deeply rooted in both the bebop and beyond idiom and his blues acumen.” – Zan Stewart