

MARK KRAMER, jazz

ONE PAGER

"... nothing short of brilliant, often closer to miraculous..."



"... a piano giant. His playing moves the modern mainstream of jazz forward, combining his early influences and his formidable technique with fresh ideas that form his own individual voice..."

Scott Yanow, veteran jazz journalist

Mark Kramer is a notable jazz pianist, arranger, and composer described by New York Times jazz journalist Nate Chinen as "... an unheralded Philly jazz institution: self taught, prodigiously gifted, obscure ... yet among musicians and fans his reputation could not be heavier; his list of credits as an accompanist and arranger reads like a modern jazz encyclopedia." But, why obscure? A late bloomer, Kramer had been at the outset living outside of the jazz mecca NYC, nor had been fully available as dual careered. He would find himself among a legion of jazz pianists whose work neither attracted an angel nor high profile musician mentor. Simply put, in the early 1980s modern jazz piano chairs were well-occupied by giants; understated acoustic piano jazz was in decline as Fusion ascended, and recording/self promotion was still out of reach of most. Thus, in attempting to differentiate from the pack, Mark developed his "Integral Jazz" - an amalgam of mostly acoustic classical, real jazz, world, and rock. Performances and scant early recordings of his work had arguably been unlike any piano or trio jazz offering that preceded it. (Listen to "A Beginning.") Even with the encouragement of several high level industry execs to continue, but lacking marketing support, Mark abandoned his original muse's tact. This proved to be an incorrect decision, as only a decade later, through now, it unexpectedly gained some industrial traction in the hands of younger artists.

Subsequently, in the late 80s, twice nationally recognized as a top undiscovered jazz pianist - described as innovative, elegant, and emotionally riveting by the Great Jacksonville Jazz Piano Competition judges (including Teddy Wilson) - Mark then produced over 40 CDs (including those globally distributed by major record companies (Telarc/Concord, Lightyear, Warner EA, and other majors) with his own trio, as well as many with keen collaborator - acclaimed Bill Evans' bassist Eddie Gomez, plus toured in a wealth of international appearances. It was only through his authentic grasp of Bill Evans' elegant jazz trio style that Mark could reimagine 8 entire Broadway shows, an entire Mozart Symphony, a Harry Potter soundtrack, the Rolling Stones, esoteric works by Eric Satie. Yet until recently, Kramer's own muse had been the casualty of such *imperfect repute*. Now, only decades later, can we hear his earliest core jazz mind at work in originals such as Sunday Afternoon, Kharis in Orange, As Is, Muse@3-4-5, a Beginning, Mount Analog, RetroOrter, and his new irreverent release - "Coitus Unreservatus."

Today - Mark Kramer's contribution to jazz is arguably singular, strikingly melodic improvisation impossibly melded with rhythmically, harmonically, and expressively complex **POST MODERN**, not 'be-bop', jazz - *at times on "steroids", "way outside" or deeply "culturally attitudinal."* It floats freely upon an harmonically advanced system, crafted over decades. Intentionally wrapped in deceptive simplicity, it alluringly spans generations, cultural divides, and levels of jazz affiliation. Make-overs of known songs are said to transmit Universals; both expressionism and formal musical story-telling share the stage. Insistent invention is carried upon waves of well-cloaked 'anything goes' near-free jazz. Given the vast crop of today's emerging educated brilliant jazz pianists, Kramer's singularity is readily evident; he neither gratuitously draws attention to the means he created, nor to his heretical acquisition of classically oriented piano touch and technique. His most recent work still requires dissemination.

Now with some industry support for bookings and promotions in 2018, and fulfillment of family obligations **, Mark re-commences recording, releases, and touring internationally as "entertainer-artist." As shown in accompanying videos, he conveys an urgent sense of real-time discovery, cloaks individualisms, and provides engrossing narratives (not shown.). Audiences do get aboard his train. It is heartening that general listeners also now enjoy his no-holds-barred primary "jazz" creations.

PAST PERFORMANCE SETTINGS

- **International mid- to large size theatres:** Merkin Hall- Lincoln Center, Garibaldi Theatre, Palermo, Kimmel Center, many others
- **Jazz Festival Stages:** Veneto, Panama, Jacksonville, many others
- **NYC jazz clubs/venues:** Iridium, Birdland, Blue note (NYU series), Cornelia Street Café, Kitano, many others
- **Art Museums/ Foundations:** Philadelphia Art Museum, Barnes Foundation, many others
- **Jazz Clubs Close To Home:** Chris' Jazz Café, Zanzibar Blue, Ye Olde Temperance House, Hong Kong Fusion Concert Room
- **Featured at Special Event fundraisers in houses of worship and community centers,** e.g., Jazz Fiddler on the Roof show, others

SOME SNIPPETS FROM REVIEWS

"... melts hard-hearted women and turn cold fishes into lover-boys... reinforces my admiration of Kramer. - Thomas Conrad, JazzTimes

Exquisite. Beautiful repertoire, gorgeously & handsomely delivered. - Michael Gladstone, All About Jazz

"... superb; reveals how much jazz can be the story of our lives and the meanings we find during the quiet hours of "recollection in tranquility" - Victor Schermer, All About Jazz

"He elevates listeners to new emotional heights- All About Jazz

"the piano becomes a living breathing thing under Kramer's hands" - Jazz Improv

"Kramer weaves wondrous sounds and emotions with sensitivity and clarity, delivering jazz as it was meant to be." - All About Jazz

Kramer's prowess at the piano remains uncontested - Jan Stevenson

FACTOIDS

To initially support his primary career as jazz musician, Mark earned an MD and PhD, became chief of Biological Psychiatry at Thomas Jefferson Medical College, and then head of Clinical Psychopharmacology at Merck and Co. In 1998 he was credited with discovery of the first new antidepressant mechanism (an entirely new principle) to come along in half a century and published as first author his findings in the premier journal *Science* and most recently published a reprise in *the Journal of Affective Disorders* (2017). He was invited to present his findings at Nobel Hall in Stockholm, Sweden. Mark served as adjunct Professor at University of Pennsylvania from 2000 until 2012, guesting in Immunology. His fully professional activity in music during these years surpassed that of most full-time musicians.

Though lacking any training in classical piano or jazz, and with his medical credentials kept under the radar Mark had been invited to lecture and perform at the New School of Music (NYC), and Berklee School of Music (MA) and other academically respected institutions.

****** Mark entirely halted music touring, production and other music activities for 2- 3 years in order to intensively care for gravely ill wife of 47 years (Meryl Lee), learn in detail on her behalf, the daunting fields of molecular biology, clinical medical oncology and to set up clinical studies overseas. Meryl Lee was afforded during most of that time nearly perfect quality of life. She died free of her cancers or metastasis in February 2017 from the barbaric delayed toxic effects of chemotherapy and radiation. It is only now Kramer will return to his music.

mark-kramer.com

For inquiries on performance availability please write jazzproductions@comcast.net

For licensing of original works or arrangements for film please use the contact form at mark-kramer.com