

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, song stylist, and composer. In the early 1980s Mark hoped to make a significant contribution to the world's jazz scene. However, at the time modern jazz piano chairs were well-occupied; modern jazz was in decline as fusion ascended; the odds of a middle aged newcomer being promoted were slim. Thus, Mark initiated a niche he called "Integral Jazz" style (an amalgam of classical, jazz, folk and Rock.) For example, Mark's "A Beginning" - a piece typical of his early bent (and only recently recorded and performed in concert by Kramer and bassist Eddie Gomez) - was unlike any piano or trio jazz that preceded it. Yet Kramer for all of his technique is remarkably bereft of formal classical piano training. He also lacked support to proceed, and thus reluctantly abandoned his original muse. Subsequently, Integral Jazz became very well-developed by younger classically proficient jazz and fusion artists such as a Brad Mehldau, Hiromi, and later to an extreme extent metrically by e.g., Tigran Hamasyan. Through marginalizing his own voice, Kramer procured licensing deals with Telarc/Concord and other major labels, i.e., by reimagining 8 entire Broadway shows, an entire Mozart Symphony, a Harry Potter soundtrack, the Rolling Stones, esoteric works by Eric Satie all in the elegant Jazz derivative of mainly a Bill Evans. Only decades later can we now hear part of his early core jazz mind at work in originals such as Sunday Afternoon, Kharis in Orange, As Is, Muse@3-4-5, a Beginning, Mount Analog, Retro-Orter and lots of others.

Today Kramer's jazz style is unapologetically **POST-POST MODERN**, often on steroids - with echoes of Evans, Hancock, Glass, Riley. His approach - well-cloaked in familiar simplified wrappings - is at heart intricate and cutting-edge; its intended to speak to jazz and non-jazz fans from all generations. The outer envelope of his music is impossibly mostly "inside" melodic - sparingly straying "outside" - and floats freely upon the complex system of harmony he crafted over many decades. His make-overs of popular song tend to transmit Universals; expressionism predominates over formal story-telling. Kramer's waves of invention are carried upon an 'anything goes' free approach, but one that shuns focus on this process.

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) Kramer went on to record over 40 CDs (including those globally distributed by major record companies (Telarc/Concord, Lightyear, Warner EA) with his own trio, as well as many with close collaborator - acclaimed Bill Evans' bassist Eddie Gomez.

Long ago Mark concluded that most non-jazz listeners would require verbal orientation to enjoy jazz. Thus, today Mark performs internationally as a jazz "entertainer-artist." By staying mostly inside (but also sparsely outside of melody), by inserting his unique harmonic framework into imaginative arrangements, by maintaining an urgent sense of discovery, and by telling stories - he invites audiences to get aboard his exciting jazz train. He is heartened that general audiences can also now effortlessly enjoy his no-holds-barred primary creations on steroids.

Mark Kramer

PAST PERFORMANCE SETTINGS

- International mid- to large size theatres: Merkin Hall- Lincoln Center, Garibaldi Theatre, Palermo, Kimmel Center,
- Jazz Festival Stages: Veneto, Panama, Jacksonville
- NYC jazz clubs/venues: Iridium, Birdland, Blue note, Cornelia Street Café, Kitano
- Art Museums/ Foundations: Philadelphia Art Museum, Barnes Foundation
- 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

SOME SNIPPITS 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 - Jon Stevenson

FACTOIDS

In order to support his full throttled career as a professional musician, Mark completed an MD degree and earned a PhD in Neuro-psychopharmacology. He was head of Biological Psychiatry at Thomas Jefferson Medical College, and subsequently 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 his findings in the premier journal *Science* and most recently its 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 of Psychiatry at University of Pennsylvania from 2000 until 2012, guesting in Immunology. Though lacking any training in 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.).

Mark's music credits also include concertizing with some of the most celebrated of jazz musicians like George Coleman, Lee Konitz, Al Cohn, Tal Farlow, Jimmy Cobb, Joe Chambers, Charles Fambrough, Junior Cook, Archie Shepp, Michael Brecker, Randy Brecker, Stanley Clark, Bud Shank, Bobby Watson, Johnny Coles, and scores more. Mark also served as jazz director for a club in the Philadelphia region for about 10 years.

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