



Pete McCann: Range (2015)

By [TROY COLLINS](#), Published: September 9, 2015 | [664 views](#)



Wisconsin-born guitarist Pete McCann has been a mainstay in the New York City jazz scene for over 25 years, yet mysteriously continues to elude widespread recognition, despite his impressive virtuosity. McCann's enviably diverse skills are well-documented on the aptly titled *Range*, the fifth release issued under his name. Joined by alto saxophonist [John O'Gallagher](#), keyboardist [Henry Hey](#), bassist [Matt Clohesy](#), and drummer [Mark Ferber](#), McCann and company embark on an eclectic excursion exploring myriad genres, from straight-ahead and post-bop to avant-garde and jazz-rock fusion.

The session opens with "Kenny," a lilting, lyrical ode to the late trumpeter [Kenny Wheeler](#) who McCann worked with back in '88. Similarly buoyant, "Rumble" cavorts with a Latinized gait, revealing a harmonic sophistication reminiscent of its dedicatee, the great altoist [Lee Konitz](#). Elsewhere, the group demonstrates its post-

bop chops on brisk swingers like "Realm" and "Dyad Changes," though one would hardly deduce the latter was inspired by Anton Webern's erudite serialism.

The majority of the date comprises a tasteful selection of creative mainstream jazz, although there are a few raw, fusion-oriented scorchers interspersed throughout the set. Careening along in odd time signatures, "Seventh Jar," "Mustard" and "Bridge Scandal" amplify the proceedings with angular themes that culminate in rousing choruses, inspiring a series of blistering metallic runs from the leader.

In contrast, the pastoral ballad "To The Mountains" demonstrates McCann's affinity for folksy Americana with airy Frisellian overtones, while "Numinous" ventures into darker territory, gradually unfolding as an impressionistic rubato tone poem. The closing acoustic number, "Mine Is Yours," features a similarly pliant rhythmic foundation, its rhapsodic minor-key melody delivered with compelling urgency.

Whether navigating quicksilver rhythm changes or introspective motifs, the quintet's congenial rapport lends the eclectic session a unified sensibility. McCann's dynamic fretwork complements O'Gallagher's recoiling cadences and Hey's kaleidoscopic filigrees in equal measure, while Clohesy and Ferber's ardent interplay fortifies the frontline. Living up to its title, *Range* makes a compelling case for McCann's manifold abilities, as a crack improviser, a noteworthy composer and a magnanimous bandleader.

Track Listing: Kenny; Seventh Jar; Realm; To The Mountains; Mustard; Dyad Changes; Numinous; Bridge Scandal; Rumble; Mine Is Yours.

Personnel: Pete McCann: electric and acoustic guitars; John O'Gallagher: alto saxophone; Henry Hey: piano, Rhodes and organ; Matt Clohesy: acoustic and electric bass; Mark Ferber: drums.

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