



NEW YORK STANDARDS QUARTET

Tim Armacost
David Berkman
Gene Jackson
Ugonna Okegwo



"Power of 10" is notable for its powerful music, intelligent interactions, excellent solos...The New York Standards Quartet takes music many listeners are familiar with, styles we can put a name to, and creates a program that illustrates just how alive jazz can be. RIC
Richard Kamins, Hartford Courant

NEW YORK STANDARDS QUARTET

BIOGRAPHY

When we formed the New York Standards Quartet (NYSQ) ten years ago, the concept was a straightforward one: PLAY JAZZ STANDARDS IN OUR OWN WAY. After playing a lot of original music (*we all compose and lead bands that do that*) we thought it would be fun and liberating to play music based on simpler, standard jazz tunes that we had grown up playing. By playing jazz standard tunes like “Confirmation” and “All the Things You Are,” we put the focus on the playing of the tune—what we do with it, not so much the tune itself. These tunes are blank slates to write on, with a lot of freedom and room for interpretation. We’ve expanded our approach to include arrangements and reinventions of these tunes, as well as original compositions that have a close connection to forms and harmonies derived from standards.

The band has been touring and developing together for ten years, and it shows in the music. Audience response has been phenomenal, and bookings are pouring in from festivals and venues around the world.

The New York Standards Quartet is Tim Armacost (*Billy Hart, Ray Drummond, Kenny Barron*) on saxes and flute, David Berkman (*Tom Harrell, Cecil McBee, Vanguard Orchestra*) on piano, Gene Jackson (*Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, Dave Holland*) on drums, and Ugonna Okegwo (*Brad Mehldau, Tom Harrell, Kurt Rosenwinkel*) on bass. This collaborative group has done extensive tours of Japan ten times, European tours twice, and multiple gigs in New York and around the United States. The group has released CDs on Challenge Records (Netherlands) and D-Musica (Japan) and signed with Whirlwind Recordings in 2014. “The New Straight Ahead” was released to rave reviews that summer followed by “Power of Ten” in November of 2015 which also received widespread critical acclaim on both sides of the Atlantic, including a Downbeat Editor's pick.

NEW YORK STANDARDS QUARTET

RECORDINGS

October 1st, 2018 Release on
CD and LP

Heaven Steps to Seven



Over the course of 13 years, fans have come to expect exquisite musicianship from the New YorkStandards Quartet. The band consistently is dazzling. Much of the charm on its impressive seventh album, Heaven Steps To Seven, lies in the quartet's ability to deliver powerful straightahead sounds and blend themwith "outside"-leaning segments within the same arrangement.

Bobby Reed

Downbeat, November 2018

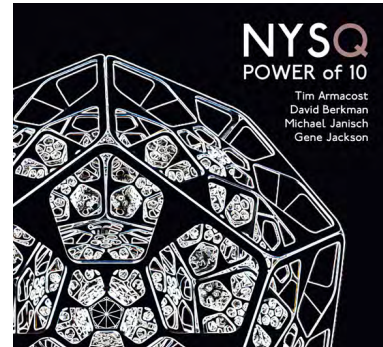
NEW YORK STANDARDS QUARTET

RECORDINGS



Sleight of Hand

2017



Power of 10

2016



The New Straight Ahead

2014



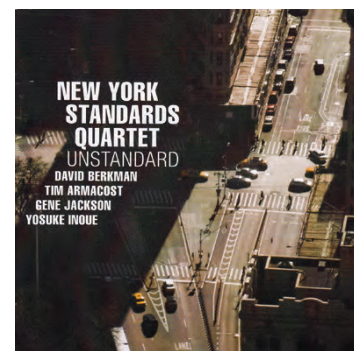
Live at Lifetime

2013



Live In Tokyo

2008



UnStandard

2011

NEW YORK STANDARDS QUARTET

UPCOMING PERFORMANCES

2019

April 19 Maureen's Jazz Cellar, Nyack, NY

April 28 We Always Swing Jazz Series at Murry's, Columbia, MO

April 29 Workshop with University of Missouri Jazz Students
Followed by performance with Columbia Jazz Orchestra

July 19 - August 2 12th Annual Japan tour: Performances and
Workshops at Concert Halls, Clubs and Schools
around the country

PAST PERFORMANCES

13 tours in Japan, including clubs, concert halls, festivals and 2 live NHK radio broadcasts. Four tours in the United States, and multiple appearances at New York City clubs including Smalls, Smoke, and the Kitano. Three tours in Europe - performances in the UK, Belgium and Spain, with a thunderous closing gig at 2015's London Jazz Festival. Workshops and masterclasses at universities in the US, Japan and the UK, including: Indiana University/Bloomington, Charleston Conservatory of Music, UNC Chapel Hill, University of Illinois, Northern Illinois University, Georgia State University, and many others.



The melodies are quite fine, the solos are strong, the interplay is exciting and intelligent...creative music that rings true.

Richard Kamins

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PRESS

"Introducing the exciting New York Standards Quartet, a group devoted to the radical reinvention of famous pop songs and Broadway show tunes. Plenty of contemporary jazz artists do that, but few more divertingly than this vivacious foursome, who delightedly cherish the originals while brusquely deconstructing their harmonies and tweaking their melodies. This is a collective class act, and a delightful surprise."

JOHN FORDHAM, THE GUARDIAN, APRIL 15, 2012

"On 'UnStandard', the New York Standards Quartet... is a wonderful group playing a straight ahead songbook that the general music fan can easily gravitate to with no fear...the listener gets an education by a senior class of jazz players. The jazz community gets another stellar record to talk about for the rest of the year. Highly recommended."

STEPHAN MOORE, JAZZ WRAP

"What's not to like about 'UnStandard'? The melodies are quite fine, the solos are strong, the interplay is exciting and intelligent, Gene Jackson's work is stellar... The New York Standards Quartet makes creative music that rings true."

RICHARD KAMINS, THE HARTFORD COURANT ONLINE

"...Climactic moment built on climactic moment. Percussive, two handed rhythmic episodes from David Berkman on piano were interspersed with fizzing runs that seemed to be exploring all the possibilities of the re-worked harmony...this is how jazz sounds now...(there was) an electric connection between David Berkman and Gene Jackson on drums. Berkman simply boiled with energy...and Gene Jackson was a phenomenon..."

MIKE COLLINS, JAZZY BLOGMAN, APRIL 11, 2011
NEW YORK STANDARDS QUARTET AT COLSTON HALL 2

"...We were swept up by the breathtaking virtuosity of these musicians...'I Love You' moved...into David Berkman's beautiful piano solo, cushioned on effortless swing. Tim Armacost's sweet soprano brought to mind Ornette. Later, Armacost's warm tenor tone reminded me of Joe Henderson with something of Sonny Rollins in the rhythm...(we heard) exciting polyrhythms from Gene Jackson's drumming, erupting into driving drum rolls—we were in the presence of a master."

LONDON JAZZ REVIEW
ON NEW YORK STANDARDS QUARTET AT
OXFORD JAZZ FESTIVAL



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GENE JACKSON

Gene Jackson is one of the most well-known and best-loved drummers of his generation. A graduate of Berklee College of Music, he began touring with Kevin Eubanks in his 20s, while still living in Boston. After moving to New York in 1987, Jackson's career blossomed. He worked with Herbie Hancock from 1991 to 2000 in a variety of bands that, at various times, included Dave Holland, Wayne Shorer and Craig Handy as members. Around this time, Jackson was also the drummer with Dave Holland's Band until Herbie Hancock's touring schedule made it impossible for him to work with both groups. Since then, Jackson has worked with most major living jazz performers, among them: Branford Marsalis, Gary Thomas, Robin Eubanks, The Mingus Big Band, Charles Tolliver, Christian McBride, Michelle Rosewoman, Clark Terry, Elvis Costello, Alex Sipiagin, Dave Kikoski, Seamus Blake and countless others. A committed teacher, Gene Jackson has worked at scores of schools, residencies, and jazz camps over the years, around the United States and internationally.



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TIM ARMACOST

After a life of travel and discovery on three continents,  Grammy nominated saxophonist Tim Armacost has established himself as one of the most important improvisers on the New York scene today. Armacost was born in Los Angeles, but came of age as a musician in Tokyo, New Delhi, and Amsterdam, where he burnished his reputation as an upcoming talent, with a big tenor sound and an impeccable rhythmic sense. He tours regularly around the world both as a sideman and a leader. He has worked with a phenomenal number of jazz greats, including Al Foster, Jimmy Cobb, Kenny Barron, Tom Harrell, Billy Hart, Victor Lewis, Jeff “Tain” Watts, Peter Erskine, Ray Drummond, Roy Hargrove, Don Friedman and Randy Brecker. Armacost has recorded eight critically acclaimed records as a leader, has performed on more than 50 as a sideman, and has composed for Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra. He is a widely respected educator, teaching at the Jamey Aebersold and Stanford Summer Jazz Workshops, at Queens College in New York City and as a clinician at universities throughout the U.S., Japan, and Europe.



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DAVID BERKMAN

David Berkman is a singular voice among the top pianists in the New York jazz scene, a world-class jazz veteran whose playing embraces and reflects his substantial knowledge of the jazz tradition, and displays his unique modern sensibility. He is an award-winning composer/bandleader, a recording artist whose 8 records as a leader have appeared on numerous “best records of the year” critic’s lists, and a renowned educator and jazz clinician who has taught at camps, universities, and conservatories around the world. He has performed with countless major jazz figures, including: Sonny Stitt, Brian Blade, Chris Potter, Joe Lovano, Billy Hart, Steve Wilson, Tom Harrell, Lenny White, Bill Stewart, Hank Crawford, Dave Douglas, and Buster Williams. He is the author of three books on jazz for Sher Music Publishing: “The Jazz Musician’s Guide to Creative Practicing” (2007), “The Jazz Singer’s Guidebook (2009)”, and “The Jazz Harmony Book” (2014). David Berkman is the director of Jazz Studies at Queens College in New York.



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UGONNA OKEGWO

Ugonna Okegwo is one of the most distinctive and sought-after bassists in the world. Born in London to a German mother and a Nigerian father, Okegwo was raised in Germany. There, he performed with Joe Newman and Oliver Jackson. Since his arrival in New York in 1989, he has become the bassist of choice for hundreds of bandleaders. He has played with Tom Harrell since the mid 90s and performed with most of the rest of the jazz community, including: James Spaulding, Al Foster, George Adams, Jimmy Cobb, Johnny Griffin, Wynton Marsalis, Junior Cook, Jackie Terrason, Brad Mehldau, Kenny Barron, Lou Donaldson, Roy Hargrove, Josh Redman, Pharoah Saunders, and Kurt Rosenwinkel. He's appeared at most major jazz festivals, the White House, and regularly at the top jazz venues around the world. He has played on over a hundred records as a sideman.

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