

Artist: Jay Vonada Quartet

CD: Expressions

Label: Independent Artist

Website: <http://www.jayvonada.net/>

Genre: Jazz

Sounds Like: J.J Johnson, Urbie Green, Tommy Dorsey, Wycliffe Gordon, Bill Watrous, Joseph Alessi, Carl Fontana

Technical Grade: 10/10

Production/Musicianship Grade: 10/10

Commercial Value: 9/10

Overall Talent Level: 10/10

Songwriting Skills: 9/10

Performance Skill: 8/10

Best Songs: Early Morning Chill, Stupifonic, The Unknown, Joy

Weakness: None

CD REVIEW:

Jay Vonada, from Aaronsburg PA, is a trombonist in the central region of Pennsylvania. He has played with such notables as Russ Kasso, Dennis Mackrel, Catherine Dupuis, Steve Rudolph, Phil Haynes, Jay Anderson, Eddie Severn, Mark Lusk, Dan Yoder and Rick Hirsch. Some have called jazz America's classical music. Unfortunately, many have also treated jazz as though it were some stuffy, snooty style, which it was never meant to be. Thankfully, Vonada and friends know it "don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing, because they swing this baby to the hilt. His current quartet of trombone, guitar, bass and drums has played at The Central Pennsylvania Festival of the Arts, at Fairs and other venues in central Pennsylvania. He also has a trio of trombone, organ, and drums that has played at Zola New World Bistro in State College, Lewisburg Live, South Hills Business School Summer Concert Series, and the Butler Fall Festival. His trio of trombone, guitar and bass has played at The Tavern Restaurant in State College and Bella Sicilia in Centre Hall. He also has a duo of trombone and guitar or trombone and keyboard (swing-nova) that has played throughout the center region, including Bella Sicilia in Centre Hall and Kaarma Indian Cuisine in State College and many nursing homes in the center region and beyond.

Band member include : Jay Vonada (Trombone), Mac Himes (Guitar), Bob Hart (Bass) and Kevin Lowe (Drums). This latest 8 Track effort from Jay Vonada is called "Expressions" and was released in 2015. A CD release party is scheduled for Saturday June 6th at The Green Drake Gallery and Arts Center in Millheim Pennsylvania from 7-830PM.

The CD gently takes flight with "Early Morning Chill" a dynamic yet smooth intro groove that serves inviting yet dynamic Trombone, full-tilt rhythm section meshed against well placed Jazz Guitar and intoxication bass lines set against a mesmerizing melody. Track 2 "Stupifonic" presents an uplifting follow-up piece that serves up slamming rhythm, methodical musical build, and rich melody served up against a grand slam chorus. I especially like the finale of this piece as it flows and ebbs its way through to emotional fruition making for an impressive follow-up statement. Track 3 "Agitated" serves up an impressive smooth as silk groove painted against impressive yet dynamic Jazz Ambience, inviting horn section and hypnotic Trombone solo. As the CD slowly unfolds I can hear the musicianship from everyone involved is clearly above the bar with impressive bass lines, slamming solos, well placed Jazz Guitar, impressive Trombone all built upon a smooth as silk rhythm section. Kudos goes out to the amazing drumming from Kevin Lowe on all pieces. Song for song the effective combination of Vonada's masterful Trombone playing and world class songwriting and top flight musical syncopation from all other members is never once called into question. Now turning our attention over to Vonada, as for his playing abilities - he is quite impressive and clearly feels comfortable in his own skin by letting it all hang out musically behind the Trombone. As an artist he is quite inspirational because he is being true to himself musically. This is the vibe I get from him. He's not trying to hard in an overcompensating way to win you over. His musical/vocal style is cut from the cloth of J.J Johnson, Urbie Green, Tommy Dorsey, Wycliffe Gordon, Bill Watrous, Joseph Alessi, and Carl Fontana. Vonada clearly showcases an infectious and appealing mezzo-soprano persona with a unique appeal makes her a bit magical. All of this makes for a strong and confident playing ability across the board. Vonada makes it all look and sound too easy. I especially like how his Trombone playing just sort of flutters melodically with the music. In many ways he is comparable to Curtis

Fuller with a songwriting style cut from the same cloth as Frank Rosolino, and Slide Hampton. All engineering aspects check out nicely. CD possess thick low end frequency and crystal clear high end clarity. This latest CD from Jay Vonada delivers 8 invigorating tracks all providing an interesting snapshot of a clairvoyant, wise and experienced artist. All songs deliver thought provoking lyrical wisdom with messages that are positive, passionate and extremely captivating and full of powerful wisdom. From heartfelt Robin's Song" to dynamic "The Unknown" to jumping "Sweet and Lowe" to grooving "Joy" this CD has something for just about everyone. The CD ends with track 8 "What Tomorrow May Bring" the perfect wrap for a catalogue like this.

I typically dedicate this paragraph to any weaknesses found on the CD, as you can see I have nothing worth mentioning.

From start to finish this latest release from Jay Vonada entitled "Expressions" is a fully loaded, powerful, inspirational, uplifting and impressive catalogue of music any way you slice it. The music is very consistent, well-crafted and extremely entertaining. Note for note, song for song there isn't really weak piece on this entire catalogue. The production strokes: writing and playing abilities of this production are world class. The enticing melodies and harmonies are well crafted and the lyrical content is packed to the hilt with rich conventional wisdom and a strong spiritual connection many will gravitate to. Perhaps a guy like Vonada is a bit beyond all this at his point in his amazing musical career. Whatever the case Jay Vonada is truly a great artist in a world full of soulless musical clutter.

Cyrus Rhodes