

The Jay Vonada Trio: Red Pajamas (2012)

By

EDWARD BLANCO,

Published: June 26, 2012



Band leader/trombonist Jay T. Vonada has shared the stage with former Frank Sinatra pianist Russ Kasso, bassists David Finck and Jay Leonhart, as well as drummers Tim Horner and Dennis Mackrel. He also leads several bands, is a member of the Zeropoint Big Band and performs in various venues throughout the Aaronsburg and central region of Pennsylvania. Vonada follows his highly respected debut, *Jammin'* (CDBaby, 2008), with another formidable performance on *Red Pajamas*, featuring nine original pieces of contemporary jazz.

Of the many groups the trombonist is associated with, The Jay Vonada Trio featured here—and which performs monthly at the Zola New World Bistro in State College, PA—may just be his most unusual band. Vonada brings together organist Alex Sell and drummer Kevin Lowe to produce a distinctive sound not typically found in a trio setting—uncommon yet engaging. Kicking off with the bluesy "Blue Mood," Vonada takes the lead, as he does repeatedly throughout, playing hard and stepping aside for some grinding sounds from Sell.

Marked by a rumbling solo introduction from Lowe, the brisk upstart waltz of "November Day" takes shape, moved along by Vonada's deliberate phrasings, Sell's tasteful organ lines and more crashing cymbal accents from Lowe. Changing directions on the aptly titled "Fresh Start," Vonada offers a classy melody more reminiscent of a jazz standard on this, one of the highlights of the disc. Lowe's "Not A Thing" contains expansive solos from the drummer while Sell's "Jeanie B." gives Vonada and the band plenty of space to explore and improvise.

Other album highlights include the upbeat "Sea Jam," "Merino" (with Vonada on muted trombone), the hurried blazer of "E in 3," and the beautiful sprawling melody of the title track. Vonada is neither flashy nor shy when he's howling on the trombone, yet it may just be his writing which distinguishes the music of *Red Pajamas*, both different and uncommonly good.

Track Listing: Blue Mood; November Day; Fresh Start; Not A Thing; Jeanie B.; Sea Jam; Merino; Red Pajamas; E in 3.

Personnel: Jay T. Vonada: trombone; Alex Sell: organ; Kevin Lowe: drums.

Record Label: Self Produced