

Chris Pasin

REVIEWS

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CHRIS PASIN

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS

(Planet Arts Records)

by Tom Pierce

Recordings like trumpeter Chris Pasin's "Random Acts of Kindness", are definitely not simplistic or overly conventional; and require focused listening to fully appreciate. But its positive qualities made this reviewer's job a lot easier than many CD's. This starts with my having already enjoyed Pasin's warm, clear and tasteful playing very often the past 4-5 years. He's been featured in a wide range of settings, including the stirring Bopitude quintet, his own bands, Mark Kleinhaut's quartet and Keith Pray's Big Soul Ensemble.

However, this CD was different from almost all of these in that it consists entirely of seven of Pasin's own far-reaching, but captivating compositions, most of which were created earlier in his career. But, I quickly got into it. This was not only because of Pasin's own attractively lyrical delivery, but also my familiarity with Mark Kleinhaut's exquisitely striking guitar work and John Menegon's masterfully compelling bass that always adds so much buoyant solidity to every band I've heard him supporting, including his own quartet in his own moving 2014 release, "I Remember You".

A quick listening to the tracks could lead some to initially classify the overall approach as "impressionistic", "deliberate" or "ECM-influenced". And there certainly are *some* of those qualities, as "Random Acts of Kindness" engaging, "feelings-provoking" approach clearly is not that of a straight-ahead, "Party" record. But a careful hearing reveals that the various numbers also consistently pulsate (in a variety of tempos), have captivating melodies that are strikingly lyrical and reflect a passionately intense vibe – all of which easily and delightfully holds one's attention.

The background for the captivating, distinctively metered opener, "Liftline Moguls" is one that Pasin describes as being inspired by & evoking a type of freestyle, serpentine skiing over a course of small mounds (moguls), that I believe originated in Bavaria. "Kayte Sunrise" is a slower, sunrise-inspired piece I found delightfully touching, with Pasin's alluring trumpet solo providing a touch of melancholy. The groundbreaking approach of Ornette Coleman and Don Cherry influenced Pasin into writing "OCDC", skillfully introduced by the creative bass solo of John Menegon, another avant-garde aficionado, whose work is likewise also well-grounded in jazz fundamentals. I appreciated the way the arrangement & the band's integration effectively resolved the somewhat dissonant and/or atonal qualities, into an accessibly appealing production, even for those of us less sophisticated listeners.

Another of my personal favorites was the haunting "Fragile Creature", that Pasin indicated was inspired by another influential Free player, Canadian trumpeter Kenny Wheeler who sadly passed last September at 84. "Smiling Eyes" is an uplifting, smartly executed piece Pasin wrote

over 30 years ago, featuring some invigorating Wayne Hawkins piano, as well as driving accents and fills by Dave Berger. Another fine example of how the CD definitely includes swinging Post-bop is the passionately moving “Nature of the Beast”, where I especially liked the strong interplay of the two stringed instruments. Lastly, “OM Flux” interestingly presents two contrasting approaches, with the deliberate opening drone-like, Balkan influenced section leading into an Indian/Turkish/Egyptian inspired torrid section, whose opening part reminded me of Dave Brubeck’s “Blue Rondo A La Turk”.

This was an exciting conclusion to an extremely well-thought out, substantial production that showcased many styles; and gave the listener a great deal to enjoy. Overall, the CD definitely reflects the wide range of musical experiences that Pasin and all these excellent, veteran musicians have had over the past 4+ decades, in a fresh, invigorating way.

Tom Pierce has had a burning passion for Jazz for over 50 years, initiated and fueled by seeing live in New York City, starting in the early 1960’s, virtually every major artist still performing. He’s been very happily living in Guilderland since 2001, as an active retiree sharing his love of music by writing online reviews for a number of web sites, preparing DVD presentations to various groups, co-Hosting Radio programs showcasing his favorite artists and busily supporting A Place for Jazz in a variety of ways.

CHRIS PASIN

DETOUR AHEAD

by Rotcod Zzaj

Here’s an excellent trumpet-led quintet (Chris) coming up for release in September.... after several listens, I can tell you that if you dig on brass with class, you’ll have to have this great CD! There are (for this listener, anyway) always *keywords* when I first listen to an artist, & with Pasin’s compositions (6 out of the 8 tracks), that word is *punch*... he’s able to knock you *out* with his superb timing and talent, but never takes anything away from the other players (Steve Slagle on sax, Benny Green’s piano, Rufus Reid on bass & drums from Dannie Richmond), & the band is totally ON it from the opening bar to the very end. I particularly enjoyed Chris’s original pieces, but a real standout was “Light At The End Of The Tunnel”, a true “equal time” song... each player gets a space to shine the light of their impressive talent... some excellent rhythm shifts will have you tappin’ toes (if you’re my age), or gettin’ right out ON that floor... this song is my favorite this year (& that’s saying something... it really *stands out* for it’s energy quotient & Pasin’s relentless lead lines)! One minor criticism – it would be nice to have some track samples up somewhere to link in – but I’m sure they will be out there soon. The liner notes say Chris has been playing since he was nine years old, & it’s readily apparent that he hasn’t stopped his pursuit of quality blow (no, I did NOT mean that in the way it sounded) since then... I’m really impressed, & believe you will be hearing many more releases from this bright light on the jazz scene! “Detour Ahead” gets a MOST HIGHLY RECOMMENDED from my ears! Get more information at www.myspace.com/chrispasin

CHRIS PASIN

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS

by Rotcod Zzaj



It's been a while since I last reviewed Chris... [issue # 94](#), where he got high marks for his great trumpet work... this new release has a different set of players (Mark Kleinhaut on guitar, Wayne Hawkings on piano, John Menegon doing bass & Dave Berger on drums). Tunes like "[OCDC](#)" will reconnect your head (& heart) with what jazz is truly all about... exploration and adventure at the highest levels; the interplay between five instruments is serene, yet jam-packed with the kind of energy most players can only dream about! If you're looking for something a bit more upbeat & rhythm-driven, you'll love "[Nature of the Beast](#)" as much as I did... in fact, this track is the one that got my vote for personal favorite of the seven all-original Pasin compositions offered up! I give Chris & his high-talent crew a MOST HIGHLY RECOMMENDED, with an "EQ" (energy quotient) rating of (a perfect) 5.00... meaning that they also get the "PICK" of this issue for "best trumpet-led jazz"! Get more information at [Chris's page for this truly exciting release](#).

CD Review by All About Jazz

By Warren Allen

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Trumpeter Chris Pasin tried to move on from jazz, but now he's back. He's a graduate of New England Conservatory's prestigious jazz program and played with many of the greats, before leaving jazz for several years. To celebrate his return, and perhaps give a glimpse of more good things to come he's brought out a never before released gem from 1987 titled *Detour Ahead*, featuring him alongside a band of Dannie Richmond, Rufus Reid, Benny Green, and Steve Slagle. The results are so vibrant and alive, that it's hard not to wonder why they fell into the vaults in the first place.

Pasin's trumpet tone is warm and clear, and his playing is grounded strongly in lyrical, adroit hard bop. The set mostly focuses on his compositions, which often walk teetering, angular patterns that still ground themselves strongly in classic jazz melody.

The beautiful "It Doesn't Matter Now" bears scars of pain like a good ballad should, with cutting

pulls of arco bass and drawn out horn harmonies. Suggesting Mingus with a swinging double time section, and the bittersweet angularity of Monk, the composition allows for burning solos. First comes Green, who almost hesitates, gathering his powers before digging into the keys. Then Pasin carves a dirty, dark, and lovely statement over sparse accompaniment.

Drummer Dannie Richmond, always explosively understated throughout his career with the Mingus band, sounds even more restrained here, a year before his death. Some tracks seem nearly without drums, save for a smattering of hi-hat and toms, but this leaves a lot of space for everyone else to fill up, and they're up to the task. Green and Reid form a hypnotic tandem that brings an edge of nuance and tradition into the music.

"Jackhammer" is hot, hot fun. It's interesting to hear how the horns' harmonies reflect a distinctly eighties jazz sound, but solos from Pasin's energetic trumpet and Slagle's bright, loquacious alto, transcend time with a sheer, breathless excitement. "Island" brings in a touch of exotic Brazilians. Slagle takes a dizzyingly pretty turn on flute. Pasin mines the burnished golden sound of his mute for gems of Latin and bebop. Green's solo, with the sensitive bass playing of Reid driving him on, reaches new heights along the brighter side of the piano.

All this is enough to make the listener excited for what else Pasin has in store. He's setting the bar high for himself here. There's also a certain prophetic quality in the title: when he recorded this, did Pasin know that his own jazz career was headed for a somewhat substantial detour of its own? Whatever the case, it's good to have him back.

CD Review by All About Jazz, Italia (*translated*)

By Roberto Paviglianiti

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Detour Ahead marks the return on the scenes, and paradoxically also the debut as leader, of Chris Pasin, trombettista in Chicago that different years ago he/she preferred to estrange from the jazz career to devote completely to the family. Praiseworthy choice, even if (seen by the part of the listener) you/he/she is treated of a sin, from the moment that this recording is an authentic delight.

It deals with a harvest of eight traces put to the world in May of 1987, where Chris decidedly uses some collaboration of a band well intenzionata. To start from Benny Green, pianist from the superb touch and endowed with millimetrico sense of the rhythm, and of Steve Slagle that, both to the soprano one and to the tall one, he/she succeeds in backing up in way paritaria with Pasin. They close the circle Rufus Reid and Dannie Richmond, essential even if practically never in evidence.

The album unties him in an hour of round jazz, deprived of big rushes of imagination and well rooted in a fascinating tradition that he/she bewitches, and fatally he/she succeeds in cradling the listener through sceneries from jazz-club, some nostalgic ones and of rare beauty. Six of the

eight proposed passages are signed by the trombettista, which he allows to love both when there is to embroider in the ballads ("It Doesn't Matter Now"), both in the moment in which grape notes in the up-time ("Jackhammer").

Useless to be to think about thing you/he/she would be been able to happen if Pasin had kept on engraving, for the time being let's enjoy us Detour Ahead and let's give him ours best "welcome back."

CD Review by Jazz Times

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By Susan Frances

Contemporary jazz trumpeter Chris Pasin shows that once you are enamored of bop, you never let it go. After receiving a dual bachelors degree at the New England Conservatory of Music in classical and jazz trumpet performance followed by performing in bands fronted by such arch luminaries as Gunter Schuller, George Russell, Jaki Byard, and Buddy Rich to name a few, Pasin took a 16-year hiatus from playing jazz and devoted his time to his family and non-musical pursuits. Detour Ahead marks his debut release as a solo artist, and strangely the tracks sound like he never put his trumpet down for a single second. Produced by Pasin, Detour Ahead is a spectacular effort that fits the casino room culture and the entrepreneurial lifestyle. It is music that entices one to act on impulse.

The meandering swerves in Pasin's trumpet thicken and ruffle up "Lost And Found" while fanned by the chime-like sprinkles of Benny Green's piano keys and fluffed up in trimmings of sprightly twitters from Steve Slagle's saxophone. The languid beats of drummer Daniel Richmond and bassist Rufus Reid in "It Doesn't Matter Now" are garnished in syrupy piano slides and slow rising elevations in the horns. Pasin's stint as a sideman in salsa and Brazilian bands comes through in the percussive burner "Jackhammer," while the soft shimmering strips in the title track harvest a topiary filled with classic lines and elegantly strewn expansions.

Pasin's studies in jazz improvisation with Jaki Byard can be the inspiration for the multi-sectional piece "The Light at The End of The Tunnel" with a tubing of exotically carved buds and conventional bop patterns. The serpentine sliver of the horns along "Enigma" are pierced by ad-hoc piano patterns and muted tones, contrasting the upbeat tempo of Pasin's interpretation of Rodgers and Hart's classic number "My Romance" with pulleys of lively saxophone squirts and graceful trumpet swags. The album draws to a close with the calypso confections that wheedle "Island" into a charming hip swaying rumba.

The dishes served up in Detour Ahead present a jazz gourmet for the bop connoisseur. Jazz music is so well rooted in Pasin that any length of time he spends away from performing it, has no effect on eroding or diminishing his talent. Apparently, Pasin's days as a sideman may have been numbered, but his time as a solo artist has infinite possibilities.

CD Review by Jazz Chicago

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Talk about your appropriate titles: Chicago-born/NYC-raised trumpeter Chris Pasin recorded this album in 1987 and only released it this year after a lengthy retirement from the music scene during which he worked outside of the music business while raising his family. Even more puzzling is the fact that this long-dormant recording is excellent and features first rate players like saxophonist Steve Slagle, pianist Benny Green, bassist Rufus Reid and Charles Mingus drummer Dannie Richmond“ on one of the last recordings he made in his lifetime. Pasin worked for and studied with numerous big names, like trumpet master Carmine Caruso, noted composers Gunther Schuller, George Russell and Jaki Byard (at the New England Conservatory), Richie Beirach, Buddy Rich, the Toshiko Akiyoshi/Lew Tabackin big band, Victor Paz, Dizzy Gillespie, Slide Hampton and John Lewis. He also performed with Frank Wess, Conrad Herwig and local favorite, pianist Jeremy Kahn.

It is clear that the education and experience Pasin gained sunk in: originals like “Lost and Found,” “It Doesn't Matter Now” and “Light at the End of the Tunnel” show his grasp of modern polyphonic techniques and an affinity for the music of masters like Monk and Mingus. Meanwhile, “Jackhammer” lives up to its name as a hard hitting burner, while the dark-toned “Enigma,” a joyous cover of Rogers and Hart's “My Romance,” Johnny Frigo's title track and a bewitching Latin-tinged “Island” round out this pleasurable gem. The playing by all involved is wonderful, especially the front line combination of Pasin and Slagle on trumpets (muted at times) and alto and soprano sax and flute. Green is spry, Reid steady, and it is truly great to hear the sadly under recorded Richmond again on this record. The best part of all is Pasin has recaptured his love of playing and has returned to the music scene with the release of this record. One hopes the detour is over and we will hear more from this sweet-toned and talented trumpeter/composer.

CD Review by Gapple Gate Music

By Greg Edwards

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Chris Pasin Releases Album After 21 Years in the Can

In the music scene there are tales of greats, near-greats and just plain old folks who abandon the music world after the scuffling and frustrations prove to be too great. I suppose I was one of them, though I am in it again on some level now. I look back at my Berklee College of Music class and how few of them stayed on the scene. Some, spectacularly, true (Joe Lovano comes to mind, not to drop names). Many not.

As so the back story of trumpeter Chris Pasin has interest because he recorded a very good modern hard bop album in 1987. Split the scene completely. And now, 21 years later, he is

releasing the recording and playing again, thanks in part to the musical awakening of his children.

Pasin's *Detour Ahead* (H2O) would or should have been well received back when it was recorded. And today it still sounds current. Pasin has that Brown through Shaw school brassiness and might have made a real name for himself. He still might. His accompanying band is top drawer, with the great Dannie Richmond on drums and some very nice work from reedist Steve Slagle, not to mention Benny Green and Rufus Reid. The music is solid and noteworthy. The Pasin originals have a classic sound to them.

I wish Chris Pasin much success on his return, and his children too!

CD Review by Midwest Records

By Chris Spector

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A solid player that cut his teeth on big bands but left the biz when the mundane world's concerns took over his life has a come back to the tent now that his kids are grown and interested in music, unearthing this date recorded back in the 80s that has never been released and shows that he was learning his craft from the masters in fine form. A trumpet man that can bring great sound from his horn, Pasin can hold his head up high that he had it going on so well back in the day. A nice welcome back that hopefully will unlock promises that had to be deferred.

CD Review by J's Top 21

By John Shelton, Ivany National News Bureau

[Visit site article](#)

Chris Pasin sounds genius and exhausting. and when that trumpet blasts it sounds like warrior music. it's music you listen to before going into battle.

CD Review by Books Music

[Visit site article](#)

Not sure if the right word I'm looking for his "methodical", but trumpeter Chris Pasin is someone who plays with precision and elegance at the same time, it is obvious he has had a lot of time with his instrument to create the kind of music one can hear on the soon-to-be-classic *Detour Ahead* (H2O).

In the 8 songs here he plays in a regal manner, but also someone who isn't afraid to let loose. "It Doesn't Matter Now" begins as a sensual song before it dips into a bit of bebop before going

back into its comfort zone, as he and Steve Slagle (also and soprano saxes & flute), Dannie Richmond (drums), Rufus Reid (bass), and Benny Green (piano) help him complete each sonic painting. When Green begins his solo in "It Doesn't Matter Now" everyone allows him to fill in with his strokes, with Reid occasionally saying "how you doin'?" with his playing, there's a moment around the 3:30 mark where they do a casual stroll and that was a nice touch. Most of the songs here are original compositions and they show how mature his playing was. Perhaps touring with Buddy Rich was a factor, or perhaps he admired his influences so much that he wanted to speak with them through music, not so much show how easily he could emulate them even if he wanted to. This is that dialogue. High compliments also go to "Island", a close-to-10 minute song that features all of the emotions one could find in a song, with everyone giving it their all in a song that could be about solitude, inner peace, warmth, comfort, or all of the above.

What surprised me is the fact that this album was recorded 22 years ago, as he chose to step out of the music realm in order to live life. Detour Ahead is perhaps a poignant title for someone who did choose to take a detour in his personal journey. It is said that he is playing and recording again, and if life is about exploring the living, his follow-up to this is sure to be an album worth savoring.

CD Review by Louisville Music News

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Chris Pasin: Detour Ahead (H2O Records H2O-01, available at www.cdbaby.com and elsewhere)
Chris Pasin is a trumpet player and composer who, shortly after recording this album in 1987, took some two decades off from the jazz scene to raise a family. The release of this disc is part of his return to jazz. He is accompanied by an all-star cast: saxophonist Steve Slagle, pianist Benny Green, bassist Rufus Reid, and legendary drummer Dannie Richmond, best known for his long tenure with Charles Mingus. Indeed, many of Pasin's compositions are reminiscent of Mingus' style, such as the opening track, "Lost and Found." The next piece also has a Mingus feel. Entitled "It Doesn't Matter Now," it shifts tempos and allows plenty of blowing room. "Detour Ahead" is a straightforward ballad. "Enigma" utilizes a stop-time rhythm to great effect. Throughout the nine songs, clocking in at just over an hour, there is great playing by all. As Pasin returns to performing, the issuing of this CD should help many to discover a talented musician and writer.

CD Review by Columbia Tribune

By Jon Poses

[Visit site article](#)

Chris Pasin, "Detour Ahead" (H2O). Anyone been reading the most recent chapter in the Ted Williams cryogenic fiasco — the one where one of the employees at that crazy facility apparently thought taking B.P. on Williams' head was an appropriate thing to do to baseball's

last .400 hitter? Well, no matter. But speaking of preserving items, trumpeter Chris Pasin, now 51, has just released his forward-thinking 1987 recording “Detour Ahead” that, at the time, involved a tremendous supporting cast: saxophonist Steve Slagle, pianist Benny Green, then in his 20s, bassist Rufus Reid and drummer Dannie Richmond.

The final name on this list threw me because I knew Charles Mingus’ last great drummer had passed away quite some time ago — in 1988 — so I thought this was someone else until I examined the date more closely. Pasin, who left the jazz world to pursue other aspirations, also is an accomplished classical trumpeter. Rumor has it the issuance of this session after more than 20 years in the vault means he’s returning to the fold. It could be an interesting development from the man who graduated some time ago from the New England Conservatory of Music. Pasin’s tone is warm and rich throughout; his playing is technically excellent, and as noted at the time he surrounded himself with remarkable talent that varied stylistically and was transgenerational. Having a bassist such as Reid — one of the planet’s best — and Richmond on drums set alongside youthful pianist Green says a lot. Slagle, meanwhile, now co-leads a band with guitarist Dave Stryker and works regularly with both Maria Schneider’s Orchestra and the Mingus Big Band.

Tribune columnist Jon Poses also serves as the executive director of the “We Always Swing” Jazz Series.