

## **Review "Open Up"**

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I've had the distinct pleasure of appraising the music of many a jazz guitarist through the years and only a hand full of such recordings would I file under the category of "excellent." I have since added Jeff Barone's "Open Up" and placed the album alongside the other special jazz guitar recordings in my personal collection. New York-based guitarist and composer Jeff Barone follows up his 2003 debut ("Crazy Talk") with a barnburner of a recording featuring masterful play on the strings and wonderful musical support.

Co-produced by renowned jazz guitarist Jack Wilkins, who lends his talents on "Jenna's Song" and on "Quiet Now," Barone assembles a fine cadre of players who provide the spark that drives the music. The personnel include trumpeter Joe Magnarelli, Ron Oswanski on the Hammond B-3, alto saxophonist Mike Dubaniewicz and drummer Rudy Petschauer.

Barone launches the music with the energetic "Duban's Groove" named after saxophonist Dubaniewicz who is featured here along with trumpeter Magnarelli and the guitarist who all together deliver a blistering performance. In quiet contrast, Barone turns to the nylon string guitar to voice the delicious breezy samba melody of "New Samba" assisted by the fluid lines from Oswanski's organ.

In a trio setting, the guitarist plays softly on the Brel/McKuen number, "If You Go Away," as the organist delivers a sensuous performance with the drummer's steady beats on one of those beautiful love songs that go to the heart. The title track "open's up" in funky fashion providing one of the liveliest tunes on the album.

"Jenna's Song," written for Barone's daughter, is a delicate

lullaby performed as a duet of guitars with Jack Wilkins joining Barone in a masterpiece performance. Other notable tracks include a spicy rendition of "Falling In Love With Love," a new read of the oft heard standard, "My Funny Valentine" and the mellow "Quiet Now" another duet performance by the guitarist.

With this new recording, Jeff Barone presents a musical package that once you "Open Up," you will believe just how good the contents really are. Containing inspired play and terrific new charts that sparkle all over, "Open Up" is one album that will not disappoint you.