

## Review "Open UP"

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Jeff Barone's new CD *Open Up* is a collection of eleven tunes (with one alternate take) comprised of finely crafted original compositions, virtuoso jazz guitar performance, musically tight ensemble work and creative improvisation. The recording includes standards from the Great American Songbook, four originals by Barone and an excellent arrangement of Herbie Hancock's tune "Toys."

In addition to Barone's melodically driving guitar, an instrument that dominant in the ensemble sound is the Hammond B-3 played by Ron Oswanski. The sound of the organ lends to the full ensemble pieces a somewhat soulful jazz sound reminiscent of the 1950's and 1960's. Not to be outdone are the two horn players on the recording Joe Magnarelli on Trumpet and Mike Dubaniewicz on alto. On the first cut of the CD, "Duban's Groove" a strongly bop oriented piece written by Jeff Barone, Dubaniewicz shines as the first soloist with an intense and harmonically inventive solo. On the tune "New Samba" also a Barone original, trumpeter Magnarelli demonstrates a magnetic melodic quality that draws in the listener to some great improvisational ideas. Jeff Barone's guitar artistry is particularly displayed on the pieces where the ensemble is pared down to a pair of guitars, Barone and fellow guitarist Jack Wilkins. "Jenna's Song" a very tender sounding ballad penned by Barone and inspired by his daughter, finds the two guitarists weaving an almost classical guitar sounding texture while delivering a very touching melody. A Latin sounding accompaniment played by one guitar aptly accompanies wonderfully melodic improvisation by the other. The two sound like two friendly musical sparring partners working together making great sounds. Another composition that features the twin guitarists is the Danny Zeitlin composition "Quiet Now." "Quiet Now" was recorded by pianist Bill Evans on a number of occasions and in the liner notes to *Open Up* Barone indicates that his version on the CD is akin to Evans' interpretation. Regardless,

Barone's playing is sensitive and quietly beautiful. This listener had the privilege of reviewing Barone's earlier work Crazy Talk. His newest recording is of no less musical import or significance. Barone is fine guitarist who plays great jazz and is a wonderfully creative musician and composer. For fans of superb jazz guitar, super tight ensemble, inventive improvisation and catchy tunes and arrangements Jeff Barone's Open Up would be a most welcome addition to any jazz aficionado's collection.