



Stan Killian

www.stankillian.com



The New York–based tenor saxophonist and composer was born and raised in Texas and began performing professionally at age 16 with his father, Joe Killian, a jazz pianist and Hammond organist who worked in bands led by sax legends Sonny Stitt, Jimmy Ford, and Don Wilkerson. With a saxophone spirit reminiscent of Illinois Jacquet, Arnett Cobb, and James Clay, the twenty-first-century Texas Tenor seeks to modernize this rich lineage by developing a highly personalized compositional approach coupled with a consistent group sound steeped in simpatico and interplay.

He graduated from Texas State University in 2001 where he studied improvisation with pianist James Polk, a Grammy nominated arranger and organist for The Ray Charles Orchestra and saxophone with John Mills. Killian performed extensively as a sideman in Austin, Houston and San Antonio before forming his own band which featured his father on piano. At the age of 21, he released his first disc *Straight Ahead*, a record of standards featuring his father and James Polk on piano and the venerable Martin Banks on trumpet. A year later, he recorded *Deep Down*, an album of ballads and blues featuring Polk and Joe Killian on Hammond organ and legendary G.T Hogan on drums. In 2003, he formed *Com Você* with vocalist Margret Grebowicz, a quintet whose repertoire consisted mostly of odd meter arrangements of bossa novas classics and Wayne Shorter tunes. They released *Candeias* in 2005 for the French record label Nocturne and opened for Zé Renato on his first American solo tour.

In 2006, Stan Killian moved to the east coast and immediately began working as a sideman in Baltimore and Washington D.C. He began private studies in improvisation with Gary Thomas and in composition with Larry Willis. He continued to lead *Com Você*, performing in New York City for the first time in January 2007. A year later, he moved to Brooklyn, and in 2009, after recording *Com Você* with contemporary jazz giants, Ben Monder, Scott Colley and Antonio Sanchez for Sunnyside Records, he formed a new quartet focusing exclusively on his original compositions.

In 2011, he released his first record for Sunnyside Records called *Unified*, which featured his working Quartet plus guest jazz great Roy Hargrove, David Binney and Jeremy Pelt. Each of the guest stars played an influential role in Killian's development as a jazz artist. The album received favorable reviews in *JazzTimes*, *Down Beat*, *All About Jazz*, *The New York City Jazz Record* and many other publications.

Stan Killian performs with his band every 2nd Tuesday at the 55 Bar in Manhattan.

Stan Killian *Evoke*

SUNNYSIDE 4012

★★★★

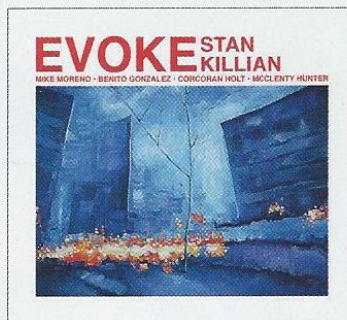
Stan Killian sounds older than his years. While the 32-year-old saxophonist had a keyboard-playing dad, Killian's alternate star here is guitarist Mike Moreno, who helps accelerate the mainstream vibe. Pianist Benito Gonzalez, like Moreno, shows up in ample fashion on the first cut, Killian's "Subterranean Melody," a kind of soft-rock melody that leaves lots of room for improvising, Gonzalez's turn coming during the band outro.

Killian seems to be an unabashed tenor player who likes to delve—as in group vibe but also just because he's a tenor player. The title track is a ballad that allows for more room, Killian's full-throated tenor less aggressive and more contemplative. It's a younger generation playing it straight-up, with no fancy, overly evocative turns, no switcheroos. "Echolalic" hints at a Pat Metheny tune, Moreno's guitar entry sending the song into its swinging waltz and Killian's mellow horn overtly stating the melody. —John Ephland

Evoke: Subterranean Melody; Evoke; Echolalic; Kirby; Beekman33; Observation; Hindu. (43:53)

Personnel: Stan Killian, tenor saxophone; Mike Moreno, guitar; Benito Gonzalez, piano; Corcoran Holt, bass; McClenty Hunter, drums.

Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com



Scott Robinson *Creative Music For 3 Bass Saxophones*

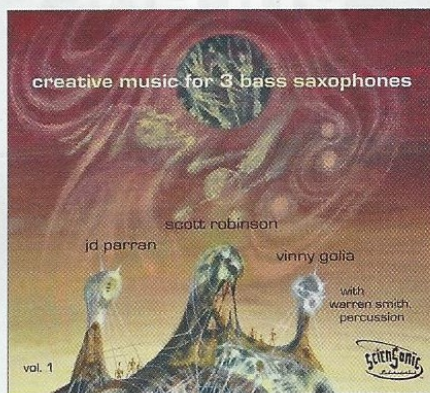
SCIENSONIC

LABORATORIES SS03

★★★★

What might a curious listener expect from this captivating title? Surely not a Nick Brignola/Pepper Adams-like baritone summit bebop blowout; a bass sax ain't a bari. Perhaps a hearty, galumphing get-together, peppered with thoughtful moments amid swing and hard-sock passages? But, no: Robinson, a reedy polymath and devoted student, unfolds his paeon to the endangered bass saxophone as a ruminative rhapsody, a meandering meditation.

Mournful, introspective, prayerful, his largely through-composed elegy seems to both celebrate and mourn these noble creatures of a bygone era, earthy mastodons in the mist. He takes sweet time unveiling a breathy genesis before unleashing bellowings from the deep: After all, Adolph Sax did not create this brass beast in a day. This perhaps excessively ruminative approach allows for neither grooves nor "classical" solo improvisations; there's little ini-



Michael Gallant Trio *Completely*

GALLANT MUSIC 003

★★★★

Midway through pianist (and DownBeat contributor) Michael Gallant's infectious and captivating *Completely*, a sizzling blend of jazz, funk, rock, r&b, a little pop and a dose of Baroque, the album puts one foot firmly in the 1990s. At the beginning of the tune, Linda Oh's popping, guttural electric bass takes off like a shot, and Gallant imm-Jam's "Go," giving the original, monoto quick hammered strokes on his elect worlds away from how Brad Mehldau ge masterpiece, Soundgarden's "Black Mehldau took a path of deep melanch rocking "Go" is simply fun laid atop a t

Gallant, Oh and drummer Chris I can be both quirky and serious, soulful on the disc, but most of the originals disc jumps from "Greens," an acoustic and rock drumming, to the sensual "C rhythm in Gallant's left hand as he mov ody with his right. "The Real Maria" op acoustic bass and scintillating snare dri bright chord changes leading the way.

Gallant's soloing also morphs thro has a heavy hand on the piano, he 1 punches on the piano, developing into ing by percussively attacking the piano chords.

Completely: Greens; Roundabout; Lightbulb; Go; C The Real Maria; Completely; Love You Better; Candlel
Personnel: Michael Gallant, keyboards; Linda Oh, b
Ordering info: gallantmusic.com

Joe Clark Big Band *Lush*

JAZZED MEDIA 1060

★★★★

Five decades of listening to big bands have made one thing clear: If you don't have a kicking drummer, you don't have much.

Joe Clark Big Band, meet Jeff Hamilton. Clark, a Chicago arrange-for-hire, compares recording his

STAN KILLIAN

EVOKE (Sunnyside)



Stan Killian is reminiscent of Jimmy Heath in that his compositions and tenor saxophone work make each other better, and reflect a

stubbornly abstruse but still amiable sensibility. He's a mainstream postbopper but favors layered riffs that don't necessarily interlock in his tunes; his swing can be restless, and have a little hitch in its gait. And he enjoys the modal form.

On *Evoke*, Killian eschews the high-powered guest stars (Roy Hargrove, David Binney, Jeremy Pelt) from his 2011 Sunnyside debut, *Unified*, and relies on the quintet that workshops his tunes every week at the 55 Bar in New York. That familiarity deepens the virtues, especially the somewhat quirky angularity, of his compositional style, while providing fewer solo highlights. It's a solid band—drummer McCleenty Hunter, bassist Corcoran Holt and pianist Benito Gonzalez return from *Unified*, and guitarist Mike Moreno has a notable résumé and a low, liquid tone that calls to mind John Scofield. But the players are mostly in service to the tunes, with Hunter the most notable colorist aside from Killian.

Not surprisingly, then, the songcraft seems top-notch. The opener, "Subterranean Melody," makes arresting use of a 7/4 pulse that surges forth from Killian's tenor as the rhythm section steadily ups the intensity. "Beekman33" moves with the sort of confident glide that became a hallmark of deeper cuts on albums released during Blue Note's golden era. And "Hindu" is an effectively itchy pastiche, enlivened by noteworthy solos from Hunter, with Gonzalez unearthing his Latin roots.

BRITT ROBSON

CAROLINE DAVIS

LIVE WORK & PLAY (Ears & Eyes)



Caroline Davis' debut as a leader is her second appearance on record overall, so in that sense the Chicagoan comes out of nowhere.

She arrives, however, with total self-confidence. There's just an edge of coarseness in



▲ Saxophonist-Composer, Composer-Saxophonist: Stan Killian

"Cheryl" deals out rests and accents like a card shark. "Passive Cloud" and the joyful "Dionysus" also mark Davis as a poised composer—still, the disc's strongest tune is guitarist Mike Allemana's "Academic Freedom Suite, Part 1." Allemana himself is one of the disc's highlights, both undergirding and gorgeously contrasting with Davis (and taking a superb spotlight of his own on "Real Rims for Calvin," otherwise a feature for drummer Jeremy Cunningham). Still, there's no doubt who's in charge on *Live Work & Play*. **MICHAEL J. WEST**

MICHAEL GALLANT TRIO

COMPLETELY (Gallant)



After logging time as an editor for *Keyboard* magazine and a contributing writer for *DownBeat*, Michael Gallant has returned to his primary

focus of the piano and makes his recording debut with this trio set. His experience playing traditional jazz, including a brief stint in the Preservation Hall band, comes across in the funky second-line grooves that permeate many of his original compositions. Linda Oh thumps out a solid backbeat on both acoustic and electric

"Go." The effort succeeds, as do more accessible, tuneful moments like "Problem With the Game" and "Completely," the latter a melody in search of a lyric. **MIKE SHANLEY**

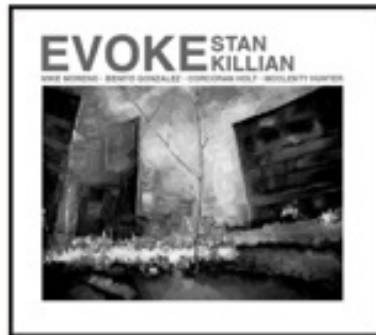
URI GURVICH

BABEL (Tzadik)



Like *The Storyteller*, Uri Gurvich's justly praised debut on Tzadik three years ago, *Babel* mates sinuous Middle Eastern and sprightly

Afro-Cuban folk forms via original compositions that are equally influenced by his native Israel and the Berklee College of Music. The core quartet is the same, with the alto saxophonist-leader again joined by Cuban drummer Francisco Mela, Bulgarian bassist Peter Slavov and Argentinean pianist Leo Genovese. But the lone change, swapping out saxophonist Chris Speed for Moroccan Brahim Fribgane as the special guest artist, is a masterstroke. Fribgane's oud playing is first plucky than sinuous on the opener, "Pyramids," and helps fuel the intensity of "Scalerica de Oro," a traditional Ladino wedding song and the lone non-Gurvich composition. Then the



Evoke
Stan Killian (Sunnyside)
by Terrell Holmes

Stan Killian couldn't have chosen a more appropriate title for his second release as a leader. This fine tenor player draws inspiration from his adopted home of New York, reflecting impressions of a place that can be a cauldron, oasis, madhouse and sanctuary all at once.

Killian starts up by going down low with the cool sophistication of the subway-inspired "Subterranean Melody". Feathery and spirited tenor sets the pace for Benito Gonzalez' fiery piano and Mike Moreno's crisp guitar lines, as bassist Corcoran Holt and drummer McClinty Hunter pulse and thrash beneath the ostinato. The excellent "Echolalic" gives some insight into Killian's writing style; this song features his trademark shifting time signatures, which happen several times. The band meets the challenge and stays in tempo throughout with no missteps. "Kirby" has an infectious height-of-rush-hour charm and is highlighted by great solos by Killian, Moreno and Hunter. "Beekman33" and "Observation" are energetic struts while "Hindu" is a light-stepping delight with a Latin pedigree. With all of the fast-paced playing on this album, the poignant title ballad provides a respite, a pocket of calm amidst the urban frenzy.

Killian is a joy to listen to, a wonderful player with a singular sound and texture. His tone is mostly smooth and even-tempered but he can blow with a streetwise grittiness or soar to the heavens. Killian's familiarity with the members of his working band allows him to compose within their collective and individual strengths; the band, in turn, knows precisely what Killian wants and the simpatico results in top-notch music, which is what makes *Evoke* such a rewarding listening experience.

For more information, visit sunnysiderecords.com. This group is at 55Bar May 14th. See Calendar.

CD Review: Stan Killian "Evoke"

By Ron Netsky

You might say saxophonist **Stan Killian** had it in his blood. His dad, Joe Killian, played piano and Hammond organ with the likes of Sonny Stitt and Don Wilkerson. So, even though he grew up in the not-exactly-jazz-mecca state of Texas, Killian emerged a distinctive player. Since moving to New York in 2006, he's collaborated with top contemporary players like Jeremy Pelt, Ben Monder, David Binney, and Antonio Sanchez.





On his new album, "Evoke," Killian is surrounded by superb players: Mike Moreno on guitar; Benito Gonzalez, piano; Corcoran Holt, bass; and McClenty Hunter, drums. They're worth mentioning up front because "Evoke" is clearly a collaborative effort, driven by Hunter and Holt, with outstanding solos by Killian, Moreno, and Gonzalez at every turn. At times it sounds like one of those glorious blowing sessions from the late 1950s. Killian is generous; sometimes he turns the spotlight on a band-mate like Moreno, whose gorgeous solo kicks off "Echolalic." Of course it isn't very long before Killian comes in with his own brilliant excursion.

Aside from his muscular sound on the tenor, Killian wrote all seven of the CD's tunes and there is not a weak link among them. "Subterranean Melody" launches the album with a nice jolt and, aside from the beautifully evocative (and appropriately named) title tune, it hardly lets up. Perhaps the best thing about "Evoke" is how non-traditional it is. The tunes feature wonderfully original chord progressions, time changes, and voicings, providing an unpredictable listening experience even after multiple listens.




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STAN KILLIAN "Evoke" (Sunnyside)

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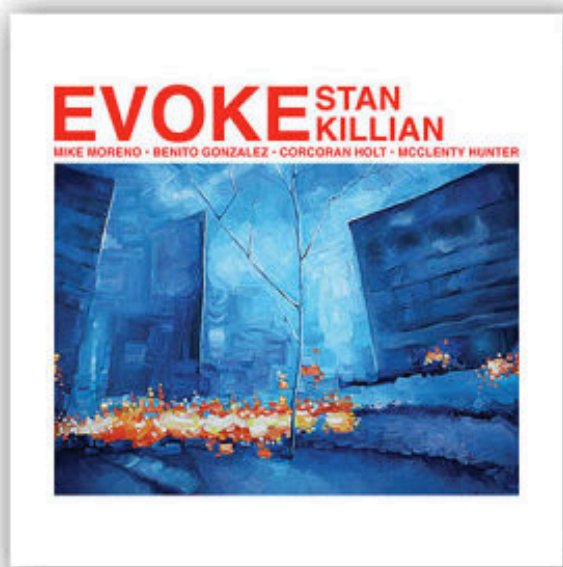
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Stan Killian's *Evoke*

Posted: Friday, April 26, 2013 5:00 am

Paul Weideman |

0 comments

All of the compositions on *Evoke* are by saxophonist Stan Killian, a Texas native (now in New York) who has worked during the last decade with trumpeters Martin Banks and Roy Hargrove, guitarist Ben Monder, and bassist Scott Colley. His second album for Sunnyside opens with "Subterranean Melody," a straight-ahead jazz number featuring the leader's strong, fluid technique and incisive contributions by his working

quartet mates pianist Benito Gonzalez, bassist Corcoran Holt, and drummer McClenty Hunter; the tune also holds a fine solo from guitarist Mike Moreno, joining the band on this bright session. Several of the songs reflect New York life; this one's A- and B-section time signatures relate to Killian's perception of subway trains approaching Union Square and running over the Manhattan Bridge. The pace steps down for the moody title track, Killian still commanding attention with his unhurried but dynamic tenor voice. "Echolalic," following a warm mosaic of electric-guitar notes, expands into spirited jazz territory — centrist jazz, that is. Killian does not stray into the more abstract realms, nor does he explore the ballad on this CD (although he did so on his early-2000s album *Deep Down*). Killian isn't too well known outside of Manhattan, where he has played regularly at 55 Bar, but nobody who plays like this remains anonymous for very long. Check out *Evoke*.

Tuneful Modes and Masterful Attack from Saxophonist Stan Killian

Texas-bred, New York-based tenor saxophonist **Stan Killian** has a gift for melodic transparency that makes a solid springboard for soloing and individual contributions. Yet while the group and solo performances on Killian's new album *Evoke* are terse and direct, the compositions are what really jump out at you – that and Killian's playing. He has a clear, uncluttered tone and a refreshingly direct melodic sensibility, with a passion for modal vamps and keen ear for microtones that he blends seamlessly into the songs' fabric. And what he's doing isn't simply bending blue notes – his attack has more in common with Joe Maneri than, say, Sonny Stitt. The band – **Benito Gonzalez** on piano, **Mike Moreno** on guitar, **Corcoran Holt** on bass and **McCleinty Hunter** on drums – stays on track with a purposefulness that's remarkable even by the standards of the New Melodic Jazz. This is an especially tuneful album, all the more considering that many of the songs were inspired by the mechanical sounds of daily urban life, from construction equipment to the thump and clatter of the N and Q trains making their way into the Union Square subway station.

The opening track, *Subterranean Melody* begins as an attractively modal jazz waltz, then goes dancing in 7/4 with Moreno mirroring Killian over Hunter's carefully crescendoing pulse. A slow ballad, *Evoke* juxtaposes Killian's allusively dark, restrained, lyrical excursions against a moody modal backdrop. *Echolalia*, another uneasily modal number, makes a good segue with its a brief triplet interlude and hints of a latin groove spiced with Moreno's judiciously placed clusters.

Kirby works off a a weird cyclical swing, bass and drums hitting on the final downbeat, up to a scurrying, nonchalant sax solo, Moreno again choosing his spots to break up the rhythm, Gonzalez hitting it hard as he takes the song upward. The pensively swaying *Beekman33*, inspired by a late-night jaunt through Bryant Park, builds from an uneasy stroll to muddled and rhythmic – clearly, what Killian thought would be a walk in the park turned out to be something else.

Observation is a tribute of sorts to the diversity of New York personalities – if the song's tricky rhythmic, almost peevish circularity is to be taken at face value, we are obstinate, persistent and leave an impression. The closing track, *Hindu* is not an exploration of Indian melody but a casually modal platform for Killian to reference some favorite influences from Joe Henderson, to Larry Young, to Woody Shaw, lit up by an incisive Gonzalez solo. Killian is currently on Asian tour and returns to New York for an early-evening, 6 PM album release show on 4/21 at his usual haunt, 55 Bar.

Stan Killian ★★★★★^{1/2}

Evoke

Sunnyside

It's easy to lean on hyperbole to describe saxophonist Stan Killian, a musician with a keen ear whose originality and strength as a leader is evident throughout *Evoke*, his fourth release of self-penned material. You can trace Killian's sound back to the glory days of 1960s Blue Note and the exuberant records by Sonny Rollins and Dexter Gordon that must have made an impact on the saxophonist. We know from his bio that Killian grew up in a jazz household—his father, jazz pianist Joe Killian took his son to his many gigs and later played on his first recordings.

A breakout on the NY jazz club scene, Killian retains the sleek rhythm team of Venezue-



lan pianist Benito Gonzalez, bassist Corcoran Holt and drummer McClenty Hunter that made his 2011 effort *Unified* so gratifying. Killian adds VIP jazz guitarist Mike Moreno to the line-up and as a band, they make a formidable quintet that fuels this dazzling—and swinging—post bop collection of seven tunes with the perfect amount of go power. The tunes themselves (there's not a weak track in the bunch) are progressive yet earthy; and Killian promotes eager interplay between his band mates, especially Moreno and Gonzalez whose tasty licks and chord changes respectively yield some of the album's best moments. For a song named after the gentle bear of a bartender at Bar 55 in New York's West Village, the Tyner-inspired runs by Gonzalez on "Kirby" flow with good feeling, a sentiment that runs throughout Killian's work.

As a player, Killian seems destined to join the ranks of jazz greats, but you don't need to be a jazz critic to appreciate how good Killian is. When I reviewed *Unified*, I called Killian "a force to reckon with," and the music and playing on this current collection continues to show that Killian is a saxophonist and composer who's going places. (7 tracks; 42 minutes)

EVOKE STAN KILLIAN

MIKE MORENO · BENITO GONZALEZ · CORCORAN HOLT · MCCLINTY HUNTER



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