

# Alon Nechushtan

PIANIST | COMPOSER

## EDUCATION

- 2023-2025 **Mason Gross School of the Arts — Rutgers University, New Jersey.**  
PhD (ABD) in music composition. Studies with Robert Aldridge, Georg Friedrich Haas.
- 2000-2003 **New England Conservatory Of Music, Boston.**  
M.A.Mus in Contemporary improvisation and Jazz. Piano studies with Ran Blake, Paul Bley, Danilo Perez, Fred Hersch. Composition studies with Lukas Foss, Michael Gandolfi, Lee Heyla.
- 1996-2000 **Rubin Academy of Music And Dance, Jerusalem.**  
B.A. Mus in theory and composition. Composition studies with Tzvi Avni, Mark Kopytman, Haim Alexander, Josef Bardanashvili. Piano studies with Slava Ganelin

## AWARDS

- 2025 **Jersey City Individual Artist Fellowship Award** for the creation of his opera "Set in Stone".
- 2024 **John Stites Jazz Award** for his jazz composition "Astounding Stories".
- 2023 **French-American Cultural Exchange (FACE) Award**—for his jazz composition "Moving voices".
- 2023 **Robert Rauschenberg Fellowship Award** for 'caged stories' – music for voice and piano.
- 2022 **Jersey City Artist Fellowship Award** for the creation of his opera "ChillTown Boogie"
- 2020 **Mark Kopytman Award** for his piece for mixed choir "Behind the Dark Gate"
- 2019 **Arthur Rubinstein Award** for his piano composition 'Walk in the Shadow of Giants' .
- 2014 **ASCAP Plus Award** for his CD 'Venture-bound' (EnJa Records, Germany).
- 2012 **Independent Music Awards (IMA)** for 'Best Jazz Album of the Year' (Buckyball Records).
- 2012 **Puffin Foundation Award** –for his composition 'Souls on Fire'.
- 2011 **Lieberson Composition Award** –for creation of work for the Israeli Contemporary String Quartet.
- 2010 **Brooklyn Art Council Award** for creation of a new work at NorthSide Town Hall, Brooklyn.
- 2009 **The ACUM Award for the support of the arts** for the creation of 'Dark Forces Suite
- 2009 **Israeli Composers League (ICL) Award** for his trio 'words beyond'.
- 2009 **American Music Center (AMC) Live For Dance award** w/ Netta Pulvermacher for creating 'Fold'.
- 2002 **Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Israel (MFA) Award** for his tour to Yokohama Music Festival (2002).
- 2001 **Rubin Academy Of Music (JAMD) Award** for the composition 'The Garden of Forking Paths'
- 1995-2001 **Six (6) America-Israel Cultural Foundation & Ronen Foundation fellowship awards**

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## SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

- 2024 **Chasms** — Composer Concordance/Naxos, USA <https://www.composersconcordance.com>
- 2023 **For Those who cross the seas** — ESP disc, USA <http://www.espdisk.com>
- 2017 **Sunset at Djerba** — Chant Records, USA <https://chantrecords.com>
- 2015 **Further East** — Live at Kennedy Center DVD <https://musicalon.com>
- 2014 **Venture Bound** — Enja Records , GERMANY [www.enjarecords.com](http://www.enjarecords.com)
- 2013 **Ritual Fire** — Between the lines Records , GERMANY [www.betweenthehines.de](http://www.betweenthehines.de)
- 2011 **Dark Forces** — Creative Sources Records , PORTUGAL [www.creativesourcesrec.com](http://www.creativesourcesrec.com)
- 2010 **Words beyond trio** — Buckyball Records, U.S.A [www.buckyballmusic.com](http://www.buckyballmusic.com)
- 2007 **Copperhead trio** — Ayler Records , SWEDEN [www.ayler.com](http://www.ayler.com)
- 2006 **The growl** — Tzadik Records, U.S.A [www.tzadik.com](http://www.tzadik.com)
- 2003 **Spanning the globe** — Future classics, NETHERLANDS [www.futureclassicsmusic.com](http://www.futureclassicsmusic.com)
- 2002 **Project soundwave**— Media1 Records, U.S.A, <http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/projectsoundwave>
- 2000 **Ancient City Blues** — MGN, NETHERLANDS <http://www.marcelworms.com/discography.html>

## SELECTED VIDEOGRAPHY

- 2024 Live at Jersey City Jazz Festival [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6\\_cMGJAAFKE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6_cMGJAAFKE)
- 2024 Live at Palo Alto, San Fransisco <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OnEyQHER0VI>
- 2023 Live at Paris Jazz Festival, France <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vAH0nN3bjqA>
- 2020 Live at Carnegie Hall, New York <https://musicalon.com/swing/>
- 2021 Live at An Die Musik, Baltimore [https://youtu.be/u\\_cvRPsV\\_OQ](https://youtu.be/u_cvRPsV_OQ)
- 2016 Live at Tel Aviv Museum, Israel <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SBCWymW27RU>
- 2015 Live at Kennedy Center, DC <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SHCxSBuKXrk>
- 2015 Live at Savassi Jazz Festival, Brasil <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=esuwRrSQZ4g>

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## SELECTED SHEET MUSIC PUBLISHERS

*IMI* — [Israeli Music Institute Publishing \(ISRAEL\)](#)

*IMC* — [Israeli Music Center Publishing \(ISRAEL\)](#)

*Andrew* [Brookwright Publishing \(US\)](#)

*Editions* [Musica Ferrum Publishing \(UK\)](#)

## SELECTED CHAMBER COMMISSIONS

<u>Barge Music,</u>	<u>Tesla String Quartet,</u>
<u>Ethel,</u>	<u>Mivos String Quartet,</u>
<u>Mise-En Ensemble,</u>	<u>The New Vocal Ensemble, (Tel Aviv)</u>
<u>New Thread Saxophone Quartet,</u>	<u>Ekmeles Vocal Ensemble, (New Brunswick)</u>
<u>Imani Wind Quintet,</u>	<u>Helix Chamber Orchestra,</u>
<u>Israeli Contemporary String Quartet,</u>	<u>Petr Kotik &amp; S.E.M Ensemble,</u>
<u>Con Vivo Music Ensemble, (NJ)</u>	<u>Tel Aviv Wind Quintet,</u>
<u>Talujon Percussion Ensemble,</u>	<u>New Jersey Percussion Ensemble (NJPE)</u>
<u>Keats String Quartet,</u>	<u>Atlanta Contemporary Ensemble (ACE), Atlanta</u>
<u>Four Corners Ensemble (Sacramento)</u>	<u>Radnovsky Saxophone Quartet (Boston)</u>
<u>Fair Trade Trio,</u>	<u>Nautilus - Composer-Librettist Studio (Washington)</u>
<u>Caught in a snare Quartet,</u>	<u>The Composers Guild of New Jersey (CGNJ)</u>
<u>Music Nova Consort</u>	<u>The National Association of Composers (San Francisco)</u>
<u>Random Access Music (RAM), Queens</u>	<u>ACM Accessible Contemporary Music - (Chicago)</u>
<u>Manhattan Children's Theatre</u>	<u>Children's Museum of Manhattan (CMOM)</u>
<u>Kaprisma Ensemble</u>	<u>Charles Neidich &amp; Composers Concordance (CC)</u>
<u>Asian Composers League (ACL)</u>	<u>Wichita Symphony Chamber players (Kansas)</u>
<u>voxnovus</u>	<u>International Computer Music Association (ICMA)</u>

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## SELECTED ORCHESTRAL COMMISSIONS

Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra (Philippines)  
Chino Toledo, Conductor

Slee Sinfonietta (U.S)  
Matt Chemberlain, Conductor

Tel-Aviv Soloist Orchestra  
Barak Tal, conductor

Rutgers Symphonic Orchestra  
Nathan Sawyer, Conductor

Jerusalem Academy of Music Orchestra  
Avner Biron, conductor

Atlanta Contemporary Ensemble (ACE)  
Amy Wilson, Conductor

Musica-Nova Consort (Israel)  
Kynan Johns, Conductor

Manhattan Wind Ensemble  
Sarah Fernandez, conductor

New England Conservatory Composers Orchestra  
Marcin Bela, Conductor

New York Andalus Ensemble,  
Dr. Samuel Thomas, Conductor

New England Wind Ensemble  
David Samour, Conductor

Slee Sinfonietta (U.S), Tiffany DuMouchelle,  
Soprano. James Baker, Conductor

M.I.T Festival Orchestra,  
Fredrick Harris, Conductor

Ashsod Symphonic Orchestra  
Dan Rappoport, conductor

America Israel Orchestra @ Carnegie Hall  
Oran Eldor, Conductor

Israeli New Vocal Ensemble  
Yuval Ben Ozer, conductor

## SELECTED OPERA COMMISSIONS

Strength Through Joy [ in development ]

Libretto By Luke Jerod Kummer

Set in Stone [ in development ]

Libretto By Lauren D'Errico

Dachau for Queers [ in development ]

Libretto By Daniel Neer

Survival Codes - Brooklyn Playhouse Theatre

Libretto by Alon Nechushtan

Legit Secrets - Sacramento State University

Edward Cummings, Conductor

Dear Midnight of Love - Church Street Center

Libretto by Alon Nechushtan

Chilltown Boogie - Jersey City Theatre Center

Libretto by Tony Azaro. Ben Grow, Conductor

Blood Tells - Washington DC State University

Libretto by Natalie Anderson

# Alon Nechushtan

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## SELECTED LECTURES AND MASTERCLASSES

Alon Nechushtan is also an in demand International lecturer with various lecture topics given worldwide:

Fusing Middle-Eastern elements in Jazz improvisation	California Jazz Conservatory (CVC)
'Rock the Casbah' - 5 decades of fusing Arabic Music & Rock	CUNY grad School
Jazz harmonic structures in the piano music of Scriabin	Columbia University
Jazz influences in the piano music of Erwin Schulhoff	Rubin Academy of Music (Israel)
Heterarchical relationship in Free Improvisation	Columbia University
Composing with Jewish (Klezmer) modes	London Klezmer Festival (UK)
Jazz Genealogy and development of personal style	Sonoma University
The contemporary Music of Alon Nechushtan	UP-Dilman (Philippines )
The piano music of Georgy Ligeti	Rutgers University
What is Jewish Music ?	Hebraica -Sao Paulo, Brasil
Innovative methods of practicing with metronome	Bloomingdale School of Music

## SELECTED INCIDENTAL MUSIC

Alon Nechushtan has composed music for over 30 film, dance and multimedia projects, working with leading choreographers and cinematographers including Netta Pulvermacher & Neta Dance, Valerie Norman & Van Dance, Edisa Weeks & Delirious Dance, Clare Byrne Dance, Jim May and Anna Sokolow Dance, Julie Gayer & Avodah Dance, Mariana Beckerman & MB Dance, Ilanit Tadmor, Victoria Hanna, Sally Ann Friedlander, Deganit Shemi Dance , David Dorfman, Michael Blake & Joffrey Ballet, Wendy Osserman & Wo Dance, Valerie Green & Dance Entropy, Nimbus Dance Company and Pele Bauch. These original compositions have been presented at Dance Theater Workshop, Performance Space 122, The Joyce soho, and various other venues in New York City, Europe, and the Middle-East. Demo Reel available upon request.

**SELECTED PRESS :** <https://musicalon.com/press/>

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**Alon Nechushtan is a talent to watch, with a surfeit of ideas, an unbridled spirit and bold, two fisted sense of architecture - Michael .F. Jackson - DownBeat Magazine**



**Alon Nechushtan** Alon has played in Carnegie Hall, Jazz at Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center, Kaufman Center, Central Park Summer Stage, BirdLand Jazz Club, Brooklyn Prospect Park BandShell, the Blue Note in NY, Europe the Americas, Far East, Asia and the middle East.

Since moving to New York two decades ago, Alon has played piano and collaborated with Jazz greats including William Parker, Don Byron, Donny McCaslin, Robin and Duane Eubanks, Dave Liebman, Bob Moses, Ben Allison, John Ellis, Alex Norris, Andy Statman, Frank London, Chris Cheek, Chris Speed, Marc Helias, Marc Dresser, Andrew Cyrille, David Murray, the late Roy Campbell and many more.

Alon has shared the stage with Frank London's trio (with Marcus Rojaz and Frank London), Baye Kouyate and his afro beat ensemble, Alicia Sviagals Klezmer Quartet, Kenny Wollesen Himalayas with Ben Goldberg, Daniel Carter's Quartet with the late Roy Campbell & William Parker's Ensemble. He is part of Roberto Rodriguez Masada Quarteto that tours worldwide playing the music of John Zorn. Alon Brought his own Quintet featuring Duane and Robin Euabanks to a 10 city Israel tour that culminated in the Tel Aviv Museum of Modern Art in 2017.

## DISCOGRAPHY

Alon has released 10 critically acclaimed CDs as a leader on his name: his piano trio [LABYRINTHS](#) in 2004 on the Swedish label Ayler records, with the Bob Gulotti and John Lockwood, Bob Moses on the rhythm section, playing his original free form compositions. Fascinated with the options of experimenting with both Klezmer (Eastern-European) modes, and Sephardic & Middle Eastern Grooves, and off course Jazz, Alon founded Talat group, the ensemble recorded a CD '[THE GROWL](#)' on John Zorn's Tzadik Records playing frequently in Festivals in Canada, Brazil, Israel, Europe, U.K, France and the U.S in venues such as the Washington D.C Jewish music Festival, The Blue Note Jazz Club, Joes' Pub at the Public Theatre. His 3rd release as a leader, [WORDS BEYOND](#), in 2011 a lyrical Trio album with Dan Weiss and Francois Moutin on BuckyBall Records, winning the Best Jazz Record on the Independent Music Awards. Another exciting release came in 2012 on Portugals 'Creative Sources, titled [DARK FORCES](#) and featured an all star downtown New York Improvisers such as Mark Dresser, Ned Rothenberg, Robert Dick, Steve Swell, Nate Wooley, Okkyung Lee, Elliot Sharp, Henry Kaiser, Brigann Kraus and Kato Hideki. 2013 a new release on Germany's Challenge records [RITUAL FIRE](#) and features clarinetist Harold Rubin, along Bob Meyer and Ken Filiano. 2016 Alon releases his newest project [VENTURE BOUND](#) on Germany's Enja label featuring an all New York star cast featuring Donny McCaslin, John Ellis, Adam Cruz, Chris Lightcap, Duane Eubanks, Roggerio Boccato, Ibrahim Frigbane. In 2017 Alon has released his " [LIVE AT THE KENNEDY CENTER](#) DVD, playing the music of Billy Strayhorn and Duke Ellington. Another video live recording from the Smithsonian Museum of Art, [LIVE AT THE SMITHSONIAN](#), a commissioned work to honor Thelonious Monk's lesser known compositions is in the final stages.

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**PRESS:**

Exceptional camaraderie and engaging performances make Alon Nechushtan's Words Beyond a trio recording worthy of the most discerning listener. **Jazz Review**

This is a superb, often hard-swinging and inventive piano trio with its own distinctive sound. The music is tight, spirited and filled with life, a more perfect piano Trio would be hard to imagine”

**Bruce Gallanter, Downtown Music Gallery**

Alon Nechushtan's Words Beyond is worlds beyond where most jazz musicians are willing and able to travel, making this album a worthwhile listening journey. **Dan Bilawsky- All About Jazz New York**

"Overall this is a great album, immensely enjoyable and deeply moving emotionally" **Adam Baruch- Jazzis "**

Alon Nechushtan's melodies and chord voicings retain traces of blues and gospel, though the phrases and forms push the music towards the future" **New York Jazz Record**

"Alon Nechushtan's sparkling technical prowess allows him to swiftly navigate through multitude of styles and the result are revelatory" **Jazziz**

Alon Nechushtan keeps his notes on their toes as he creates tightly-rung arabesques and vivacious pirouettes with his keys. He has an instinct for organizing purely improvised energy that requires the audiences' undivided attention.

**Susan Frances- Jazz Times**

A New York resident since 2003, his potent partnership with Weiss and Mouton places a premium on group interplay at the same time it encourages individual solo expression **Bill Milkowski - Jazz inside**





Players ›

## ALON NECHUSHTAN

*Combining Worlds*

Recently, during his first West Coast tour, pianist Alon Nechushtan perched at the piano at Los Angeles' intimate nightclub Vitello's on a Friday night. The crowd was restless, but he quickly won them over. With unyielding assurance, he led his pick-up band through an extended set that touched upon blues, modal standards and closed with a swinging touch of klezmer propelled by drummer Chris Wabich's tambourine and Nechushtan's own percussive rattle. The Israeli-born musician consistently demonstrated his vast skill-set with confidence and humor.

It was the pen that brought him to the United States as a classical composition major at Boston's New England Conservatory. Today, more than a decade later, Nechushtan is part of a growing circle of jazz musicians bridging the musical realities of New York and Israel.

Nechushtan credits saxophonist Arnie Lawrence (1938–2005), a former *Tonight Show* band contributor and the founder of the New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music in New York, with expanding his and many other Israeli kids' horizons. In 1997, the saxophonist moved to Jerusalem and founded the International Center for Creative Music, where an impressionable young Nechushtan took in the sounds of swing. "He played a large role," Nechushtan said. "He's kind of a crusader in that manner. I remember hanging out with him and learning about jazz. He was very patient."

Jazz's presence in Israel, relative to the history of the genre, is a fairly new phenomenon. The rise

of internationally acclaimed artists like guitarist Roni Ben-Hur, violinist Miri Ben-Ari and the Cohen siblings (Anat, Avishai, Yuval) has helped broaden the appeal of swing in Israel, where jazz is now part of the sonic landscape.

The pianist is levelheaded when discussing the current state of the Middle East. He diplomatically avoids any comment on the summer's unrest, focusing solely on the sounds coming from the stage and his unrelenting desire to return. Prior to his gig at Vitello's, he shared a bill with the mighty Los Angeles-based Palestinian saxophonist Zane Musa. The two got along so well that Musa joined in the following night to blast through Nechushtan's newest material. Nechushtan is happy to welcome as many voices to his compositions as he can.

"From a very early age, I wrote for classical ensembles but I always wanted to write a big band chart," Nechushtan said. "Sometimes I keep the worlds separate. Sometimes I combine them. I went to school fascinated by Third Stream, classical and jazz. You have to go from lead sheets to incredibly descriptive music. When you work with a small combo, they are an integral part of making that music [come] alive. You don't have to have every gesture written down. My music is descriptive when it is a combo—not as much as when it is written down—but my creative process is the same."

As an undergraduate, Nechushtan began his jazz studies in earnest, taking up with pianists Danilo Pérez and Fred Hersch. "They were great

teachers, but I wanted to study with New Yorkers like Uri Caine and Henry Threadgill. My idea was to come to New York and try. I didn't know that I would love it and stay."

His new album, *Venture Bound* (Enja), is an upbeat homage to that decision to stay. (He has lived in New York City for the last 10 years.) A small ensemble of New York-based heavy hitters help deliver his message. The dual tenor saxophone onslaught of Donny McCaslin and John Ellis ensures a breathless display of honking soul, while drummer Adam Cruz can dance like raindrops or smash like polyrhythmic thunder. The entirely original set includes "The Gratitude Suite," which splashes Eastern European modes over tight harmonies aided by trumpeter Duane Eubanks, while "Haunted Blues" features the pianist's hard-bop swagger encircling the upper register. The engaging, accessible album is squarely focused in the pocket with the occasional sprinkle of ancient modes to reflect the pianist's diverse background.

Undeterred by the turmoil in his homeland, Nechushtan will continue to tour there. While he and his family have settled in New York, the lure of his roots is irresistible. "It's a matter of playing to people who want to go out and hear music," Nechushtan said. "If they are depressed and bombs are falling overhead, it's a challenge of a different kind. It's not a musical challenge. It starts to be a safety challenge. But I will be there no matter what."  
—Sean J. O'Connell

## Alon Nechushtan to play Summer Jazz Stroll

by Mary Wade Burnside LIFESTYLES EDITOR | Posted: Sunday, June 14, 2015 12:00 am

CLARKSBURG — Jazz pianist Alon Nechushtan was vacationing back home in Tel Aviv, Israel, last August when he decided to scour the Internet for events he would like to play.

He came upon the West Virginia Jazz Society, which books concerts in and around Clarksburg, and decided to give organizer Eric Spelsberg a call.

“A lot of friends were touring at the time, and West Virginia was a place I hadn’t been yet,”

Nechushtan said during a telephone interview from his home in New York City.

“It looks very interesting and very manageable. New York to West Virginia is not a very big commute. I thought, ‘It’s been on my radar for a while, to tour and venture out to these areas. Why don’t I look into it?’”

So Nechushtan and his jazz quartet will be one of seven acts appearing at five locations during the 2015 West Virginia Jazz Society’s Summer Jazz Stroll, which will take place beginning at 6:30 p.m. Friday.

Nechushtan’s quartet will be playing three hour-long sets at Washington Square beginning at 8 p.m. At that venue, Cappellini Quartet will kick things off at 6:30 p.m.

Other acts and venues during the Summer Jazz Stroll will be the Bob Thompson Trio beginning at 6:30 p.m. at the Fifth Floor Lounge, the Davin Seamon Band beginning at 6:30 p.m. at Kelly’s Irish Pub, The Mendoza Brothers opening at 6:30 p.m. and then the Lee Covington Quartet playing three sets beginning at 8 p.m. at the Main Street Cafe and Robert Redd & Sharon Clark beginning at 6:30 p.m. at the Starving Artist Studio.

A graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, Nechushtan is a jazz pianist



Alon Nechushtan

Nechushtan

and composer of traditional contemporary improvisation, a concept developed at the New England Conservatory.

The concept first was called “Third Stream” by former school president Gunther Schuller because of the idea that modern jazz music was a hybrid of other music.

“The first stream was classical and the second is jazz, and the third integrates them both,” Nechushtan said. “It’s a term he founded in the 1960s, and now it’s been changed to contemporary improvisation.”

As a composer, Nechushtan writes pieces for himself but also for others, including right now two orchestral works that will be premiered in the Philippines.

“It’s music that doesn’t have any piano, but it has improvisation, which is the foundation of jazz, and it has a more modernistic approach,” Nechushtan said. “Strings and French horn and bassoons are not the kind of instruments you find in jazz per se. When you are asking musicians to improvise or play scales that have blue notes, there are hints and melange of jazz. It’s a more modern approach to what is jazz.”

During his performance in Clarksburg, the quartet, consisting of a saxophone, bass and drums, in addition to himself, will be playing music from Nechushtan’s most recent album, “Venture Bound.”

“I like the idea of touring with that project,” he said. “I like the idea that it’s always a new venture.”

Nechushtan grew up in a small town outside of Tel Aviv in a musical family. His mother is a music teacher and his father is a violinist.

“Music has been in my family from day one,” he said. “It’s part of the Russian Jewish tradition — to have the kids playing. The Jewish education really wants the kids to have some kind of musical background, so mom insisted and I spent my early years practicing classical music and looking for a creative way to express myself.”

In order to branch out into other types of music, Nechushtan and his friends would go to a used record store that allowed them to play the vinyl before purchasing it, and he ended up stocking up on jazz albums, including those by Chick Corea and Herbie Hancock.

“I would buy all kinds of records,” he said. “I have thousands of records in my house. For a few shekels, we could buy all the records we would like.

“That was affordable and fun, and I listened to a lot of music as a teenager. The next thing is I would listen and try to play along.”

Eventually, Nechushtan decided that the New England Conservatory was the place for him, so he auditioned and won a scholarship.

“The department thought I was a really good candidate for that department,” he said.

The acceptance allowed Nechushtan to study with three important jazz pianists and composers in the contemporary improvisation field, Paul Bley, Danilo Perez and Fred Hersch.

Late last year, Hersch was nominated for a Grammy Award for his latest album, “Floating,” as was his song “You & the Night & the Music.”

After Nechushtan finished at the New England Conservatory, he decided to move to New York City, which reminds him of home.

“There is a lot happening,” he said. “Boston seemed to be a very mellow place. New York is a little more the lifestyle to what I’m close to, so that felt like a natural move.”

In addition to his Friday appearance at the Summer Jazz Stroll, Nechushtan has a busy few months planned. After West Virginia, he will be traveling to the Savassi Festival in Brazil. Then he will return home for the Red Sea Jazz Festival in Eilat, Israel.

And in September, he will take part in a centennial celebration of Billy Strayhorn, composer of “Take the A Train,” at the Kennedy Center in Washington.

“I love playing my own music, but as you probably know, running around New York I have to wear lots of hats,” Nechushtan said. “Some of the hats are as a composer, and some of the hats that I wear are as a performer and I play other compositions with joy. I try to balance being in my own ensemble and playing other pieces.”

## Alon Nechustan: *Venture Bound* (2014)



By [DAN BILAWSKY](#),

Published: July 8, 2014 | [1,067 views](#)

Pianist Alon Nechustan is full of surprises. His work with Talat — *The Growl* (Tzadik, 2007)— placed him in the alt klezmer jazz category, but he refused to stay put in that area. Nechustan changed gears with *Words Beyond* (Buckyball Records, 2011), casting aside his allegiance to Hebraic-tinged melodies so he could focus on the modern language of the jazz trio. Then he quickly abandoned that course-on-record, redefining himself as an electro-acoustic outlier with the grim *Dark Forces* (Creative Sources Recordings, 2011) and re-centering himself with *Ritual Fire* (Between The Lines, 2013), a ten-part suite for jazz quartet. Nechustan clearly doesn't like to repeat himself, so it should come as no shock that *Venture Bound* is something different altogether.

This record, perhaps more than any other in Nechustan's discography, is the sum of the pianist-composer's beliefs. He doesn't paint himself into a specific corner or rely on a single guiding principle here. Instead, he simply tears down the walls of stylistic separation in his work, delivering a record that may be the truest representation of his artistic self.



# Alon Nechustan: *Venture Bound* (2014)

Nechustan's interests in Middle Eastern-tinged creations, odd meters, direct melodies, and rhythmic rabble-rousing are on display throughout this date. As a soloist he's capable of setting the mood via gorgeous sound painting, hammering down chordal proclamations, or casting off sprinting sixteenth note runs; as a composer, he's capable of anything. Twist-and-turn constructs (mostly) in seven ("L'Avventura"), sunny silk-spun melodies that betray his roots ("The Gratitude Suite"), a somewhat Monk-ish creation ("Serpentrails"), an adrenaline-fueled danger ride ("Pome(Grenades)"), and a taste of the old school ("Haunted Blues") all surface at one time or another.

The music on *Venture Bound* is basically built around a foursome, with Nechustan joining forces with bassist Chris Lightcap, drummer Adam Cruz, and one of two saxophonists—either John Ellis, who immediately establishes himself as a force to be reckoned with on "L'Avventura," or the ever-impressive Donny McCaslin. A few guests drop in—trumpeter Duane Eubanks expands the frontline on a couple of occasions, oud player Brahim Fribgane re-contextualizes the group's sound on "Dark Damsel," and percussionist Rogerio Boccato adds a dash of percussive coloring—but this record still plays out as a four-man operation.

Thus far, Alon Nechustan's recorded oeuvre has marked him as a restless and wandering spirit; that's what continually makes his work so interesting. *Venture Bound* finds him looking out in all directions, sharing wondrous views within anybody willing to look and listen.

Track Listing: L'Avventura; The Gratitude Suite; Pome (Grenades); Dark Damsel; Sneak Peak; Haunted Blues; Snow-Flow; F.A.Q.; Serpentrails.

**Personnel:** Alon Nechustan: piano; Donny McCaslin: tenor saxophone (2, 4, 6, 8); John Ellis: tenor saxophone (1, 3, 5, 7, 9); Chris Lightcap: bass; Duane Eubanks: trumpet (2, 6); Roggerio Boccato: percussion (2); Brahim Fribgane: oud (4). Record Label: [Enja Records](#)



## Alon Nechushtan: Venture Bound (2014)

[NERI POLLASTRI](#), **Published: June 17, 2015 in Italian |**

After his interesting *Ritual Fire*, 2013, the Israeli pianist Alon Nechushtan now presents this new work, actually recorded in April 2012 and substantially more conventional, albeit tinged with elements that give it a personality of its own.

Training is a classic quartet with tenor-saxophonist Donny McCaslin and the two John Ellis alternate track in track-which only a few tracks you add a guest. The general atmosphere is that of a dynamic modern jazz compositions based on lyrical narrative structured in a traditional way, with typical spaces for expressive soloist. The musicians involved show undoubted qualities, without significantly stand out for their originality.

In all, the personal element of the work is essentially the presence within the compositions of the themes of Jewish or otherwise of Middle Eastern tradition. A discreet, mind you, that comes out several times in almost all the tracks-in a very tangible, for example, in "The Gratitude Suite" or "Dark Damsel," where is enhanced by the sound of the oud Brahim Frigbane-without slipping into forms of way.

The Jewish melodies in fact not so much to act as thematic material-indeed, sometimes the issues are completely different, typically modern jazz filigree -how emerge here and there, crowning a building that retains its autonomy and is not used for "standardize" the Jewish tradition. And what can be heard in those passages in which it appears-for example in the concluding "Serpentrails," with a strong flavor monkiano - whilst still retaining the same identity of those that are more characteristic.

Track Listing: The Adventure; The Gratitude Suite; Pome (Grenades); Dark Damsel; Sneak Peak; Haunted Blues; Snow-Flow; F.A.Q .; Serpentrails.

Personnel: Alon Nechushtan: piano; Donny McCaslin: tenor and soprano; John Ellis: tenor and soprano; Chris Lightcap: contrabass; Adam Cruz: drums; Duane Eubanks: trumpet; Roggerio Boccato: percussion; Brahim Fribgane: oud.

Record Label: Enja Records

<http://www.allaboutjazz.com/venture-bound-alon-nechustan-enja-records-review-by-neri-pollastri.php>

**Date/Time**

Date(s) - Sunday, June 29, 2014  
4:00 pm - 6:00 pm

*Map Unavailable*

**Location**

[An Die Musik](#)

**Category(ies)**

- [Events](#)

**Alon Nechushtan & Venture Bound CD Release Tour** Winner of 2012 'best Jazz trio album' - independent music awards with *Michael O'brien - bass Franco Pinna - drums Greg Ward - Saxophone + special Guests* Tickets: \$10 in advance/\$13 at door Each new album by Alon Nechushtan offers a fresh glimpse at his diverse and complex musical personality, which seems to be able to encompass a vast, cross-genre richness, which eventually becomes his very own. The most amazing quality of his is that he always sounds as if he already played this or that specific sub-genre for years, whereas in fact a comprehensive knowledge of his output so far reveals that he is probably one of the most chameleonic Jazz musicians around. But regardless of the specific musical environment Nechushtan selects as his weapon of choice at a specific moment, he is always honest, both with himself and the listener. The quality of players he selects as his partners, the wonderful technical qualities, the incredible melodic wealth and above all the ability to communicate with his fellow musicians and his public alike are a direct result of this honesty. Nechushtan's music is always an amalgam of influences: first and foremost Jewish music in all forms and shapes, but also the endless varieties of the Jazz Art Form, which together create the new "Jewish Jazz" phenomenon, This album, although less obviously connected with the Jewish context and emphasizing the Jazz tradition and its contemporary state of affairs, is nevertheless an integral part of his continuous musical journey, which is always fascinating and heartwarming. - Adam Baruch, Kiriath Haim,

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Home » Concert/Art » Downtown » Billy Strayhorn Revisited - Celebration of Jazz

## Billy Strayhorn Revisited - Celebration of Jazz

Tue., Sep. 29, 11 a.m.

409 N. Charles St.

An Die Musik

\$15 | 410-385-2638

[Downtown | Website](#)

☆☆☆☆☆ 0 Reviews

[Map](#)

Alon Nechustan Ensemble [new york / israel ] (Featuring Todd Marcus) : Strayhorn Revisited: A Middle Eastern Odyssey of Rhythm, Harmony & Groove - will blend both the sounds of jazz and the middle east and it's rich influence over jazz musicians, through a broad periodic narrativic selection of some of Billy Strayhorn's greatest compositions in that vain. The concert spans an almost 100 year period - from the early Ellingtonian sound of the 20's to this day. The selected materials include a few of the essential gems from the Far East Suite (such as 'Agra', 'Amad', 'Mount Harrisa'), along with Strayhorn's later dramatic textual driven works such as 'Sonnet in search of a moor' & the adaptation of Federico Garcia Lorca's poem 'The Flowers Die of Love' and other chance encounters he had with the gripping influence of the Middle East. The program will conclude by blending my original 'Soul-FuJFire' - hommaging my personal inspiration with Billy's Harmonic gift as a composer and brilliant series of integrating the middle eastern modes with sophisticated palette of harmonic structures for improvisation.

## Events Calendar

September



Alon Nechustan, pianist; Donny McCaslin, saxophonist; Chris Lightcap, bassist; Adam Cruz, drummer

Much more successful and completely enjoyable is Alon Nechustan's new CD, [Venture Bound](#). Nechustan is one of the finest pianists in contemporary jazz, with a discography that ranges from 2012's superb *Words Beyond* to the electronic experiments of *Dark Forces* (2012). The new disc is something of a departure, or better yet an addition, to his style, which exemplifies both current ideas in jazz and through depth of the roots from which they grow.

Like Citerman, Nechustan uses music with a clear Jewish sound, yet unlike Citerman there is no sense of ideology on his new album. Phrases, scales and harmonies are interpolated into the overall compositions and arrangements. There are also no arguments about jaw-rock-punk, etc, this is totally a jazz CD, and Nechustan's music is for the group to play and then mine for material for their solos.

The pianist has developed a distinctive, rich sense of harmony. He seems like he's constantly substituting alternate chords in his own arrangements, and the music modulates frequently, always with logic and purpose. This gives the heads of tune a highly improvisatory feeling, and the accompaniment for the solos is complex enough to sound like Nechustan had worked it out, painstakingly, with pencil on paper.

Highlights are sufficiently abundant to be meaningless—everything sounds great, every moment leads the ear to the next, each track demands more listening. The run in the middle of the record of "Dark Damsel," "Sneak Peak" and "Haunted Blues" is particularly strong, and McCaslin matches Nechustan for expressive power, imagination and fluidity. Terrific all around.

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By: gtra1n Category: Reviews Tags: Alon Nechustan, Bop Kabbalah, CDs, Jazz, Jews, new releases, Ty

# Bluefat

Bluefat home

Features

## Triple Echo

### ALON NECHUSHTAN

playing in L.A. July 10-12.

There's a real toughness of mind and spirit in the way Alon Nechushtan grabs hold of his music and hurls it into the air. Born in Tel Aviv, the New York-based pianist/composer brings his Russian/Hungarian/Transylvanian/Uzbekistanian roots to bear in choice new jazz meltdowns that pay their respects to the classical and folk strains of his forebears while savoring jazz's freedom to, well, totally mess with 'em. Nechushtan has gotten big props for his probing and athletic piano in various jazz and klezmer groups (he leads the band Talat, which released a 2007 record on John Zorn's Tzadik label), and has composed for large ensembles in the U.S. and Israel.

Among a healthy heaping platter of other things, Latin, blues and a touch of gospel twine with Ashkenaz/Sephardic and Coltrane-/Tyner-ish modalities on Nechushtan's new *Venture Bound* (enja), a happily bold batch of tunes done with the aid of a ripping band including sax men Donny McCaslin and John Ellis, trumpeter Duane Eubanks, bassist Chris Lightcap and drummer Adam Cruz. In tracks like the opener "L'Avventura" you'll hear a post-post bop that kills so nice with its easy flow of simply great chords, the melodies and harmonies going every which way (and seemingly in opposite directions sometimes). The band fits Nechushtan's exploratory moods like they were born to do so, hopping through devilish times and countertimes spliced into single lines with gleeful ease and flair.

It's great how nothing comes off forced or contrived in the kaleidoscopic variety this composer wedges into his longer pieces such as "Snow Flow" and "The Gratitude Suite," the latter hybridizing klezmer-aligned melodic lines with lovely Eberhard Weber-ish bass melodicisms and one very fine trumpet solo. "Haunted Blues" is anything but as the band scales great pyramids of harmonic/melodic/rhythmic interplay; "Snow Flow" and "F.A.Q." make even more clear Nechushtan's disciplined compositional approach, which gives his pieces a satisfying (and helpful) sense of shape and symmetry — and he and his soloists thus make every note count. Nope, nothing drags on too long in this new jazz, in tunes that are in reality quite short 'n' sweet but have the effect of having really taken you someplace. *Venture Bound* is beautiful, invigorating music, smartly conceived and joyfully played. Who could ask for more?

Alon Nechushtan is flying high right about now and most likely nowhere near peaking. If you're in L.A., you owe it to yourself to catch him doing what he does at these three performances: on July 10, 8 p.m., at the Levantine Center; July 11, 7 p.m., at Upstairs at Vitellos Jazz Club; and July 12, 8 p.m., at Curve Line Space.

— John Payne

New One from Alon Nechustian!

ALON NECHUSH-TAN with DONNY MCCASLIN/JOHN ELLIS/CHRIS LIGHTCAP/ADAM CRUZ + DUANE EUBANKS et al - Venture Bound (Enja #803; Germany) Featuring Alon Nechustian on piano & compositions, Donny McCaslin & John Ellis on tenor saxes, Chris Lightcap on bass and Adam Cruz on drums plus Duane Eubanks on trumpet (2 tracks), Ibrahim Brigane on oud and Roggero Boccato on percussion. This appears to be the sixth disc by Israeli born/New York-based pianist Alon Nechustian, which includes his Coppenhead Trio with guest Bob Moses on Ayler Records. Each of his previous discs has featured different personnel and each has been recorded for different labels: Tzadik, Between the Lines and Creative Sources. Mr. Nechustian always picks the cream of the Downtown scene and here he does it again. The sound of each disc is very different than each of the earlier ones. Each of the two saxists here play on different songs, not together. Mr. Nechustian is a powerful, often hard swinging pianist who is at the center of each piece and plays with exuberance throughout. He often reminds me of Peter Madsen, who is one of the greatest under-recognized pianists still alive. His writing and arrangements fit the talents of his chosen players just right. The theme to "The Gratitude Suite" has a warm, savory melody with lush harmonies for the horns (tenor & trumpet). Nechustian likes to write songs with difficult, quick moving changes which push other saxist to navigate the rapids as they sail quickly with Alon's piano pushing and supporting superbly throughout. One of the unexpected delights here is the playing of an oud (Ibrahim Brigane from the Go Organic Orchestra) to "Dark Damsel", which adds a sly middle-eastern vibe. There are a few songs here which sound rather sunny yet whenever anyone solos they do a fine job of sailing over the bumpy waters below. The playing here is often exquisite and consistently inspired without any of the usual turbulent tension of most discs from the Downtown Scene. - Bruce Lee Gallanter, DMG CD \$16

also, past Nechustian CD at a Price Break directly from Alon!

ALON NECHUSH-TAN WORDS BEYOND TRIO with FRANCOIS MOUTIN/DAN WEISS - Words Beyond (Buckyball 024; USA) Featuring Alon Nechustian on piano & compositions, Francois Moutin on bass and Dan Weiss on drums. You might recognize the name Alon Nechustian from his disc on Tzadik from a few years ago under the name Talat. Alon is originally from Israel and currently resides in NYC. French-born bassist Francois Moutin lives in NY and has played with Martial Solal, Michel Portal, Rudresh Mahalingappa a has a band with his brother called Moutin Reunion Quartet. Trap drummer & tabla player Dan Weiss is one of most unique and busy drummers in NY playing with Dave Elman, Joel Harrison, Carl Maguire and Miles Ozaki as well as leading a couple of his own bands. Although Talat was a part of Tzadik's Radical Jewish Culture series, this trio is not held to any particular style or genre. This is a superb, often hard-swinging and inventive piano trio with its own distinctive sound. The music is tight, spirited and filled with life, often navigating between quick twists and turns. There is a realness quality going on here where nothing stays in one place for very long, the dynamics keep shifting throughout. Each piece provides a different challenge for the trio, the writing and playing is mature and extremely well-constructed. This disc is filled with endless surprise. You often think you know where a piece will go, but it suddenly changes direction and shifts into unexpected area, yet the flow remains consistently organic. A more perfect piano trio would be hard to imagine. - Bruce Lee Gallanter, Downtown Music Gallery CD \$107 for 6 SALE

ALON NECHUSH-TAN with KEN FILANO/BOB MEYER + HAROLD RUBIN - Ritual Fire (Between the Lines 71224; EEC) LIMITED TIME PRICE: normally \$16! Jackson Pollock made "Action Painting" well known a while back, and he became one of the most important painters of the 20th century. This art form considers improvisation to be a vital element in painting. Color is often not applied with a brush, but drop by drop, for example, sometimes applied to the canvas directly from the can. Simple materials and techniques result in amazing results. In spite of this, it is not at all abstractism, but instead is done based on comprehensive knowledge of all set structures and techniques. But they are just not satisfied with set structures. "Action Suite" by the pianist Alon Nechustian pursues similar considerations. Based on virtuosic mastery of musical instrumentation and with a clear idea of what music pieces created in free improvisation should express, a number of previous pieces are created - and these grow together into an overall work of art. Free improvisation in this sense is the opposite of lack of prerequisites. To the contrary: it only works if each single member of the band contributes all of his expertise, experience and skills into a mutual work networked internally. That is what accounts for the extraordinary fascination of "Ritual Fire": Inner concordance of the musicians that has become rare that makes the free improvisation seem to listeners as if it were composed. CD \$107 for 6 SALE

ALON NECHUSH-TAN/MARK DRESSER/STEVE SWELL/OLEG FASKIN/NEC ROTHENBERG/ROBERT DICKMARCUS ROUS/NATE WOOLEY/OKKYUNG LEE/BRIGGAN KRAUSS/HENRY KAISER/ELLIOTT SHARP - Dark Forces (Creative Sources 195; EEC) Former Israeli-based pianist and composer Alon Nechustian, remains a mysterious figure and a part of the Downtown network. A gifted pianist, his first CD to come to our attention was a Klez-like recording on the Tzadik Radical Jewish Composer Series. Then last year he had a fine piano trio disc on Buckyball. Now Mr. Nechustian has put together an impressive all-star cast of eleven of Downtown's best musicians, recorded over 7 years. There is only musician with whom I was not familiar, Oleg Faskin on alto sax. For this disc, Alon is listed as composer and producer only. When I looked at the line-up I was just as amazed as you however the music was something else entirely. The pieces are not named and they often deal with strange textures and atmospheric sounds. It doesn't sound as if there were any written music here although it does sound as if the music was carefully arranged and/or focused. Many of the sounds and spaces are filled with suspense and restrained tension. The Spanish label Creative Sources has been around for nearly a decade, has close to 200 releases and most often deals with lower case improv. Although this disc features some ten musicians, it sounds as if there are no more than 3 or 4 players on each track. The overall mysterious and often sparse sounds are perfect for this label. Nobody really solos here yet the music remains fascinating throughout. The personnel is as such: Henry Kaiser & Elliott on electric guitars, Oleg Faskin on alto sax, Ned Rothenberg on base clarinet, Briggan Krauss on bar sax, Robert Dick on base flute, Nate Wooley on trumpet, Steve Swell on trombone, Marcus Rojas on tuba, Mark Dresser on double bass, Okkyung Lee on cello and Alon Nechustian as the composer. - Bruce Lee Gallanter, Downtown Music Gallery CD \$107 for 6 SALE

also available..

ALON NECHUSH-TAN & TALAT with MATT SHULMAN/MARC MOMMAAS/MATT PAVOLKA/JOE DAN PERLSON - The Grov (Tzadik 8113; USA) Alon Nechustian keyboards; Marc Mommaas saxophones; Matt Pavolka bass; Jordan Perlson drums; Matt Shulman trumpet. Talat is a dynamic new ensemble based in New York that plays original music crossing the borders of Jazz, Middle Eastern Groove and Klezmer. Featuring a quintet of some of the most talented players out of the new generation, this is a brilliant debut CD that will delight fans of Masada, Rashanim, Seltah and the Hasidic New Wave. Loping melodies, catchy hooks and improvisational fireworks from a new generation bringing Jewish music to exciting new places. RADICAL JEWISH CULTURE SERIES CD \$14



## Tel Aviv Native Leads Trio in Adventurous Repertoire at Hartford

### Library Jazz Series

By [OWEN MCNALLY](#) • JAN 13, 2016



*Alon Nechustan*

#### **Alon Nechushtan embraces everything from klezmer to classical.**

While the voraciously eclectic and boundlessly energetic jazz pianist/composer Alon Nechushtan boldly bends and blends all genres with his steely-fingered technique, flooding the keyboard with shimmering notes and angular ideas held together with an overarching, complex architecture, his music is accessible, even delightful.

Yes, it's challenging and perpetually quests for new expression. Yet it's as vital as dance, as much fun as folk. Refreshingly, it's also fluent and un-afflicted with pompous, academic rigor mortis posing as profundity. It thrives on invention, not pretension. And it can also crackle with an engaging sense of humor with its witty, Monkish, puckish rhythmic variety, use of dissonance, momentum, and a sense of play that engages listeners in the pianist's musical journeys.

A globe-trotting native of Tel Aviv, the New York-based Nechushtan displays his bright, cosmopolitan style -- one that embraces everything from klezmer to classical, and mainstream to *avant-garde* -- as he leads his trio on Sunday, January 17, at 3:00 pm at the [Hartford Public Library's free Baby Grand Jazz series](#).

Nechushtan thrives on mercurial interplay with colleagues. He'll be joined by double bassist Lars Ekman and drummer Colin Stranahan.

Since moving to New York about ten years ago after studying at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, Nechushtan has made his mark as a sideman with premier progressive musicians, and recorded acclaimed releases on his own, albums that document his all-embracing, yet highly distinctive style. Among these are his 2014 release, *Venture Bound*, on the German label, Enja.

Nechushtan's co-travelers on that adventurous exploration are saxophonists Donny McCaslin and John Ellis, bassist Chris Lightcap, and drummer Adam Cruz. It showcases nine original compositions well-stocked with nourishing substance seasoned with a suite-like flavor.

**In a life-shaping turning point, Nechushtan decided to study jazz in America.**

Music and instruments were at the center of Nechushtan's life right from the beginning. His mother was a music teacher. His uncle taught violin. In high school, he got hooked on progressive rock bands like Genesis and Pink Floyd. While stationed in Jerusalem during his military service, he studied classical music, including composition.

In a life-shaping turning point, Nechushtan decided to study jazz in America, enrolling at the New England Conservatory of Music. He studied contemporary improvisation with the great American composer and musician Gunther Schuller. There, he was exposed to a wide variety of influential performers and thinkers, including pianists Ran Blake, Paul Bley, Danilo Perez, and Fred Hersch, as well as Hankus Netsky.

Instead of going back home to Israel after his studies, Nechushtan hung out in Boston, playing there and periodically in New York City before taking yet another giant step and moving to Manhattan, the jazz capital of the world. Since then, he's

performed with an array of jazz shakers-and-doers, including William Parker, Dave Liebman, Bob Moses, and Andrew Cyrille.

Nechushtan has played around the world, from the Far East to Brazil, and of course Israel, and at many prestigious venues, including Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and the Blue Note. His bulging resume gives a hint of his versatility with credits ranging from the Yokohama Rejoicing Sounds festival in Japan, where his contemporary orchestral compositions were presented, to the Tel Aviv New Music Biennale, where his compositions for large ensemble were featured.



*Alon Nechushtan*

CREDIT MUSICALON.COM

**Alon Nechushtan 'Venture Bound'**



**July 2014 by Scott Yanow**

Alon Nechushtan is a creative modern jazz pianist who, while inspired by his Israeli background and by post-bop jazz, has his own voice both as a pianist and as a composer. He moved to New York over a decade ago and has since performed with such notables as Don Byron, William Parker, Bob Moses, Ben Allison, Francisco Mela, Andy Statman, Chris Cheek, Chris Speed, Andrew Cyrille, the Frank London Trio, and Daniel Carter's Quartet in addition to Klezmer bands and with avant-garde players.

Nechushtan has led his own albums since 2004. Some of his music has mixed together jazz with Klezmer and Middle Eastern rhythms and grooves. He has composed new works for a wide variety of ensembles including for bass and electronics (Dark Forces), for saxophone quartet, and for larger bands, dance companies, visual artists, and soundtracks.

Venture Bound, Alon Nechushtan's eight CD as a leader, teams him with top musicians from New York. Most of the selections feature him in a quartet with bassist Chris Lightcap, drummer Adam Cruz and either John Ellis or Donny McCaslin on tenor. Ellis and McCaslin alternate throughout the set with Ellis on five of the nine selections and McCaslin on the other four. Two songs also include trumpeter Duane Eubanks while percussionist Roggeno Boccato and Brahim Brigbone on oud appear on one selection apiece.

## **Alon Nechushtan 'Venture Bound'**

In the brief liner notes Alon Nechushtan says that "Each of the songs presented here is an homage, gratitude or tribute to some of my favorite pianists and composers." Unfortunately he does not say who the tributes are honoring but it ultimately does not matter because the music is so rewarding.

The opening "L'Avventura" features Nechushtan and John Ellis soloing over a fast 6/4 groove, playing music that is both adventurous and accessible. On "The Gratitude Suite," the group effortlessly plays in 7/4. The long melody and the harmonies will remind one of the Middle East but the playing is definitely American-based jazz. McCaslin takes an excellent solo and Nechushtan, jamming over some unusual accents by Lightcap and Cruz, makes mincemeat of the 7/4 time.

On the uptempo "Pome (Grenades)," Nechushtan really tears into the piece, displaying both virtuosity and a steady stream of creative ideas. "Dark Damsel" has a spot for Brigbone's oud along with some dynamic tenor playing by McCaslin. "Sneak Peak" is a fast jazz waltz that inspires some heated solos. "Haunted Blues" is the most traditional sounding piece on the CD, a soulful number on which Nechushtan early in his solo even quotes Dizzy Gillespie's "Good Bait." Duane Eubanks makes his second appearance on this selection.

"Snow-Flow" is taken in a fast 5/4 time and is most notable for John Ellis' fluent soprano solo. The lyrical "F.A.Q." and "Serpentrails" (based on Thelonious Monk's "Ask Me Now") conclude the well-rounded set.

**Venture Sound gives one a good sampling of today's modern jazz scene and it is an excellent example of the artistry of Alon Nechushtan.**

Venture Bound - Enja 9603 – [www.enjarecords.com](http://www.enjarecords.com) Lavventura; The Gratitude Suite; Pome (Grenades); Dark Damsel; Sneak Peak; Haunted Blues; Snow-Flow; F.A.Q; Serpentrails

PERSONNEL: Alan Nechushtan, piano; Donny McCaslin or John Ellis, tenor; Chris Lightcap, bass; Adam Cruz, drums; Duane Eubanks, trumpet; Roggerio Boccato, percussion; Brahim Brigbane, oud

## Alon Nechushtan- *Venture Bound* (Enja Records)



By [Thomas Conrad](#)

The single most salient fact about current jazz is its ongoing globalization. Jazz is an open-ended, self-renewing art form that draws strength from sources far outside itself. Example: *Venture Bound*.

It is hardcore, up-to-the-minute small-ensemble jazz with a unique sonic signature. Alon Nechushtan was born in Tel Aviv. On “The Gratitude Suite,” the formal chiming of his piano introduction is overtaken by wheeling klezmer rhythms when the band kicks in. On “Dark Damsel,” Brahim Brigbane’s fidgeting oud, old and exotic and Middle Eastern, creates sinuous counterpoint with Nechushtan’s freeform 21st-century piano.

“Pome(grenades)” starts as a headlong thrust, but then it careens back on itself, like a Balkan circle dance.

Nechushtan now lives in New York and has internalized its unforgiving energy. He characterizes his album as “a continuous journey through a New York night seeking adventure.” Two of the city’s most steadfast saxophonists, Donny McCaslin and John Ellis, play on alternate tracks. Nechushtan’s nine original compositions are angular, meticulous and engaging. *Venture Bound* truly feels like a “continuous journey” because it veers down many city streets. **Everyone—including bassist Chris Lightcap and drummer Adam Cruz—takes turns leading the adventure, their edgy New York solos emerging from Nechushtan’s colorful ethnic context.** Both McCaslin and Ellis take their time and sweat the details. Nechushtan himself is so embedded in the album concept that you are less aware of him as a soloist than as an intelligence that ties everything together. But in fact his individual piano statements are varied, concise and complete, sometimes twisting long, fine strands (“F.A.Q.”), sometimes digging in and grooving (“Serpentrails”).

In the new millennium, many compelling jazz voices have come from Israel: Anat Cohen. The two Avishai Cohens (trumpeter and bassist). Omer Avital. Gilad Hekselman. Add Alon Nechushtan to the list.

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**ALON NECHUSHTAN ~ VENTURE BOUND ENJA 9603 (Barcode: 063757960324)**



*by : Adam Baruch*

This is another wonderful album by Israeli (resident in US) pianist / composer [Alon Nechushtan](#), one of the leading contemporary Jewish Jazz musicians. It was recorded in a quartet setting with saxophonists [Donny McCaslin](#) and [John Ellis](#) alternating between the tracks, bassist [Chris Lighcap](#) and drummer [Adam Cruz](#). Three guest musicians participate on a few tracks. The album presents nine original compositions, all by Nechushtan.

Each new album by Alon Nechushtan offers a fresh glimpse at his diverse and complex musical personality, which seems to be able to encompass a vast, cross-genre richness, which eventually becomes his very own. The most amazing quality of his is that he always sounds as if he already played this or that specific sub-genre for years, whereas in fact a comprehensive knowledge of his output so far reveals that he is probably one of the most chameleonic Jazz musicians around.

But regardless of the specific musical environment Nechushtan selects as his weapon of choice at a specific moment, he is always honest, both with himself and the listener. The quality of players he selects as his partners, the wonderful technical qualities, the incredible melodic wealth and above all the ability to communicate with his fellow musicians and his public alike are a direct result of this honesty.

Nechushtan's music is always an amalgam of influences: first and foremost Jewish music in all forms and shapes, but also the endless varieties of the Jazz Art Form, which together create the new "Jewish Jazz" phenomenon, which is taking shape on the contemporary music scene all over the world, but mainly in the three focal places: America, Israel and Poland. These three scenes, although slightly different, are going in the same direction in many respects, and Nechushtan is definitely one of the Jewish Jazz most prominent pioneers.

This album, although less obviously connected with the Jewish context and emphasizing the Jazz tradition and its contemporary state of affairs, is nevertheless an integral part of his continuous musical journey, which is always fascinating and heartwarming.

# THE JERUSALEM POST

Jazz pianist Alon Nechushtan veers into a variety of musical directions.



By BARRY DAVIS 08/14/2014 16:30

Alon Nechushtan has covered some ground to get where he is today. Nechushtan has been living in the US for around a decade and, by all accounts, appears to have made the most of his time there. Following sage advice from fellow Jerusalem-born pianist Yitzhak Yedid, Nechushtan enrolled at the prestigious New England Conservatory in Boston and studied with such masters as pianists Ran Blake and Paul Bley, who had also tutored Yedid.

Opting for NEC was something of a seismic career and artistic shift for Nechushtan. "I had no idea what contemporary improvisation was before I went to NEC," says Nechushtan. "When I was at the academy, all I knew about [outside pure classical music] was third stream." The latter is a term coined by composer Gunther Schuller in the late 1950s, which relates to a fusion of classical music and jazz.

"I took a klezmer course, too," he says. "That definitely broadened my horizons. Before that, I thought it was Eastern European music played at weddings. I never thought I could seriously

study klezmer repertoire." While at the Boston school, Nechushtan got some hands-on experience of the genre and played in the New England Conservatory Klezmer Band. "That is one of the most acclaimed klezmer ensembles in the world, alongside the Klezmatics," he notes.

World-famous Jewish New Yorker trumpeter Frank London, a member of the Klezmatics, will present a workshop at the annual Klezmer Festival, which will take place in Safed from August 18 to 20, and will also perform at the Jerusalem Sacred Music Festival early next month.

The breadth of Nechushtan's stylistic hinterland certainly comes across in his latest release, *Venture Bound*, which came out a couple of months ago. The nine self-penned tracks cover expansive sonic and dynamic ground. In "Dark Damsel," the pianist delves deep into Middle Eastern territory, enlisting the help of Moroccan-born oud player Brahim Bigbane. And there are several quotes from "Morenica," an old Ladino song best known for the versions by Esther Ofarim, Ofra Haza and Habreira Hativit.

The "Haunted Blues" cut on *Venture Bound* is just that, and the melody is steeped with heady blues textures and rhythms, with the odd rock-inclined departure. The closing number of the album, "Serpentrails," references one of Nechushtan's primary sources of inspiration – iconic bebop pioneer pianist Thelonious Monk. Nechushtan has clearly ventured far and wide since his days at the academy in Jerusalem. "When I told people there that I wanted to do a master's degree in improvised music, there were quite a few raised eyebrows," he recounts. "Most of the people there thought that if you started studying in a particular direction, you should complete it." Mind you, that doesn't mean that the pianist has forsaken his musical roots. "I continue to write classical music and orchestral works," he says, "but I also incorporate jazz and improvised sections. It feels right to delve into different areas, and it feels more complete." Nechushtan says it is very much a two-way street and that he plies his offerings across all kinds of domains. "I include improvised passages in my classical works and, of course, there are many written parts in jazz works. I am considering releasing an album in the near future with [trumpeter] Roy Campbell and [bassist] William Parker." The pianist says that he increasingly goes with the flow.

There are out-and-out avant-garde artists whose work is generally considered to be too challenging for people who prefer to get their musical kicks from the commercial and mainstream areas of entertainment. But Nechushtan swings – frequently literally, in a musical sense – all ways. "I write and play very communicative music and also noncommunicative music and written music and music without a written score," he notes. "My upbringing in classical music and jazz enables me to enjoy the best of all worlds." *Venture Bound* represents a degree of closure and summation for Nechushtan. "The CD is a sort of homage to the almost 10 years I have spent in New York, so the album is a salute to pianists whom I have heard in New York and pianists and composers that have influenced me," he explains.

"One of them is [late French pianist Michel] Petrucciani, and there's Thelonious Monk as well, whom I strongly reference on the album. I have lots of influences, including Israeli and Jewish influences. It all flows through me and infuses my music."

# JEWISH JOURNAL

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## CULTURE

**Alon Nechushtan: Jazz music with Israeli roots** by [Kirk Silsbee](#) July 6th 2014



The history of jazz is rife with junctures where the music received an infusion of creative innovation from the far-flung provinces: Louis Armstrong turned Chicago on its ear in the 1920s; the Count Basie Orchestra and Charlie Parker hit New York in 1936 and 1941, respectively; and Ornette Coleman left Los Angeles to “change the century” at New York’s Five Spot in 1959.

In the last decade, an influx of Israeli musicians has been invigorating New York City and the larger American jazz sphere. They include saxophonists Eli Degibri, Danny Zamir and Ori Kaplan; violinist Miri Ben-Ari; guitarist Roni Ben-Hur; bassist Omer Avital; sibling reed players Anat and Yuval Cohen; their brother, trumpeter Avishai; and bassist Avishai Cohen (no relation). Are you getting all this down?

Add the name of pianist and composer Alon Nechushtan to that list. The 39-year-old Tel Aviv native has released a half-dozen beautifully vital recordings since he immigrated to New York a decade ago. The newest album, “Venture Bound,” is part of the push that brings him to the West Coast for his first visit. Nechushtan’s quartet will be on display for three nights: July 10 at the Levantine Cultural Center in Los Angeles, July 11 at Vitello’s in Studio City and July 12 at Curve Straight Space in Los Angeles. His recordings usually feature small band configurations,

[http://www.jewishjournal.com/culture/article/alon\\_nechushtan\\_jazz\\_music\\_with\\_israeli\\_roots](http://www.jewishjournal.com/culture/article/alon_nechushtan_jazz_music_with_israeli_roots)

and that can be a bit misleading. Nechushtan is a composer who has equal parts classical music and jazz under his fingers, and he's written a fair amount of music for orchestras.

The elements that roil around in Nechushtan's musical stew account for much of its savory appeal. Rollicking jazz that can dance as easily as it can offer meditative interludes collides with klezmer's minor-scale abandon or a sonata-like piano. Gypsy strains and Middle Eastern modes foment in the same pot. The offset metric complexity of "The Traveler" (from the 2011 "Words Beyond" album) further loosens Thelonious Monk's treatise on rhythmic displacement, "Evidence." Or does it nod to Bartok's folksy modernism as well?

Nechushtan's studies at the New England Conservatory of Music brought him into contact with strong musical presences: pianists Ran Blake, Paul Bley, Danilo Perez and Fred Hersch. Hankus Netsky, leader of the Klezmer Conservatory Band, inveighed upon Nechushtan to seriously address klezmer.

Pausing before the start of his current tour, Nechushtan took time to speak by phone from Manhattan about his music.

"I owe Hankus a lot," Nechushtan said. "He got me to play in klezmer ensembles; I didn't know that music before that because we didn't hear it much in Israel."

"Ran Blake is a real theoretician," he continued. "He's thought a lot about improvisational piano. Paul Bley is almost shockingly nonacademic, but we had some great talks. Danilo exposed me to new rhythms and options of composing in the moment. And," he added with enthusiasm, "I love his sense of humor! Humor is very important: If music is too self-important, it loses something for me."

"Jewish music has humor and sadness at the same time," Nechushtan clarified. The son of an Uzbek mother and a Hungarian father, Nechushtan heard a lot of the Soviet postmodern composers, and he even speaks a little Russian. Igor Stravinsky's music is a continuing source of enjoyment as well. Nechushtan holds that in contemporary music, "Everything is plural in a way. It definitely is a global village."

So, is Nechushtan a composer who plays piano, or a pianist who composes? He paused before answering. "That's a heavy question," he conceded. "I started as a composer before I went onstage. Before that, I gave my music to other performers; I had written some classical guitar pieces and chamber works before playing my music publicly. If I can't be up there, that's fine with me; a lot of my music is best understood in performance."

"I don't have to be inside the music," he continues. "In fact, it's an important part of the process for me to see how it's interpreted by conductors or big bands. It's good to step outside yourself to see how other people hear your music."

Nechushtan said the concept of dance is important to his music. "I like the joy and the humor of klezmer, which is balanced by the minor-scale sadness. Bartok said if there's no motion, then there's no emotion. The joy in the music is to move you to dance — it's very hard to stay still when you're listening to a *horah!*"



## The Talat Ensemble, Guest Zane Musa, Middle East Groove

posted June 29, 2014 - 5:15pm by [Editor](#)

**Jul 10 2014 8:00pm**

Price: \$15 general admission, \$12 members/students/seniors, \$18 after July 9

### Levantine Cultural Center

**5998 W. Pico Blvd Los Angeles CA 90035**

Between La Cienega and Fairfax street parking

The Levantine Cultural Center is jazzed to present an evening of lively jazz groove with visiting New York ensemble [TALAT](#), and guest star Zane Musa, a brilliant saxophone artist. One night only, not to be missed, seating is limited, we suggest reserving early.

A quartet of accomplished musicians led by Alon Nechushtan, TALAT plays original interpretations of klezmer, Middle Eastern grooves and African themes and spirituals, roaming between the borders of jazz, groove and improvisation. With piano, trumpet, saxophone, bass and percussion, TALAT offers improvised interludes, riveting solos and spontaneous team play. Combined with familiar riffs and lively rhythms, they create music that is as challenging as it is appealing. Bandleader and pianist Alon Nechushtan is a graduate of the New England Conservatory and the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance, and the recipient of numerous awards and grants. The band's debut recording on the prestigious Tzadik label earned accolades from music critics around the world. TALAT has toured in the US, Europe and the Middle East, and this is their LA debut.



**listen to Talat's music by clicking this image**

**Zane Musa:** click the image to watch him play ZANE MUSA is a jazz saxophonist/composer/vocalist. This Los Angeles native of Palestinian heritage has performed with some of the world's greatest artists. For two years he was a member of the house band on the Carson Daily show for NBC and has worked on the Jimmy Kimmel show as well as the Voice. He has worked alongside artists such as Roy Hargrove, Jon Mayer, Christina Aguilera, Macy Gray, and Arturo Sandoval to name a few. He is currently a member of the Arturo Sandoval Quintet and recorded as a guest soloist on Arturo's latest album Dear Diz. Zane's debut album was released in 2005 under the Straight Ahead record label founded by Bernie Grundman and Stewart Levine. Zane has performed all throughout the world including the Hollywood Bowl, Lincoln Center, IAJE conventions, Quebec City jazz festival, and festivals throughout Europe and Asia. Zane's solo project is a unique blend and a variety of musical styles ranging from jazz to pop with heavy emphasis on improvisation. [Watch & listen](#) to Zane perform with the Mideast masters of jazz at The Mint.

#### **More About Alon and TALAT**

**Talat, led by keyboardist-composer Alon Nechushtan**



Alon Nechushtan's music adventures has brought him to far corners such as the Yokohama Festival Japan with his contemporary compositions, The Sao Paulo Jewish Music Festival with his group Talat, Toronto and Montreal with his Trio Words Beyond, the Tel Aviv New Music Biennale with his music for Double Quartet. Resident of New York City, Alon has performed as a pianist in venues such as Carnegie Hall, Central Park Summer Stage, The Blue Note Jazz Club and Jazz at Lincoln Center frequently with his projects as a band leader of various groups or as an in demand sideman. Alon has performed with Essiet Essiet, John Benitez, William Parker, Frank London, Bob Moses, Ben Allison, Donny McCaslin, John Ellis, Anat Cohen, Francisco Mela, Chris Cheek, Chris Speed, Sam Newsome, and many New York City greats including appearance with Frank London's trio (with Marcus Rojatz and Frank London), Baye Kouyate and

his Afro Beat Ensemble featuring Emilio Valdez, Alicia Sviagals Klezmer Quartet with Larry Eagle, Kenny Wollesen's Himalayas with Ben Goldberg and other guests. Recording Cds for Tzadik collaborating legendary producer Bill Laswell, Ayle Records (Sweden), Future Classics, (Netherlands), Creative Sources (Portugal), Challenge (Germany).

All About Jazz magazine called him "A fantastic pianist-composer with abundant chemistry and boundless eclecticism," while Down Beat Magazine recognized, "A talent to watch, with a surfeit of ideas, an unbridled spirit and bold, two-fisted sense of Architecture."

TALAT plays original multicultural music based on new directions interpreting Klezmer, Middle Eastern grooves and African themes and spirituals, roaming between the borders of jazz, groove and new structures of improvisation, using a unique blend of scales and modes often used in the Ashkenaz traditions in East Europe, cross overed with North African modes. TALAT has played at some of the best Festivals and clubs in New York, Europe and the Middle East including the Sao Paulo Klezmer festival in Brazil, London Klezmer Festival in the U.K, The Blue Note Jazz Club and the Public theatre in New York City, The Jewish Music Festival in Washington D.C, The Toronto Jewish Center in Canada, Celebrate Israel Festival in Palm Beach, Florida, The Jerusalem Festival In Israel, the 92nd street Y, City Winery NY and many more.

**[More about the musicians](#)** including keyboardist-composer-band leader Alon Nechushtan.



# Jazz picks: Albert 'Tootie' Heath, Alon Nechushtan

Los Angeles Times

Arts & Entertainment /  
Music / Pop & Hiss

This article is related to: Jazz (Music Genre), Music Industry, Herbie Hancock, Norah Jones



By [Chris Barton](#) [contact the reporter](#)

JULY 10th 2014

## Alon Nechushtan at Vitello's

A composer-pianist who has performed with a range of ensembles around the world, Tel Aviv-born Alon Nechushtan offers joyfully drawn hints of his travels on his latest album "Venture Bound," which features bright touches of classical and klezmer music.

The album features a crack lineup in saxophonists Donny McCaslin and John Ellis as well as drummer Adam Cruz, but for this L.A. run of shows he'll be backed by an ensemble that includes Brian Walsh on saxophone and a rhythm section of David Tranchina and Chris Wabich.

*Upstairs at Vitello's*, 4349 Tujunga Ave., Studio City. Fri., 8 p.m. \$20 [www.vitellosjazz.com](http://www.vitellosjazz.com). Also performing at *Levantine Cultural Center*, 5998 W. Pico Blvd., Thurs., 8 p.m. \$15 [www.levantinecenter.org](http://www.levantinecenter.org); and *Curve Line Space*, 1577 Colorado Blvd., Los Angeles, Sat., 8 p.m. [www.curvelinespace.com](http://www.curvelinespace.com).

FOR MORE INFO:

<http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/music/posts/la-et-ms-jazz-picks-albert-tootie-heath-alon-nechushtan-blue-whale-20140710-story.html>

<http://www.nydailynews.com/entertainment/gossip/confidential/kimye-standing-joke-concert-article-1.1942214>

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## Kim Kardashian defends Kanye West after criticism for asking fan in wheelchair to stand up at concert

Rihanna tells off CBS; the thigh's the limit for Matthew Morrison; Miley Cyrus knows how to use her head

BY MARIANNE GARVEY, BRIAN NIEMIETZ AND OLI COLEMAN / Wednesday, September 17, 2014, 2:00 AM

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### ALBA, KIDS TAKES IN A PLAY

**Jessica Alba** and her daughters, **Honor**, 6, and **Haven**, 2, visited the Children's Museum of Manhattan recently, where they attended the "All Jazzed Up Performance" by **Alon Nechushtan** in the lower level, a spy tells us. After catching the performance, a low-key Alba and her excited girls headed to the main floor, where they were spotted playing in the EatSleepPlay: Building Health Every Day exhibit. "They stayed for several hours," says our snitch.

# United Mutations - Belgium

[alon nechushtan: venture bound](#) by Peter Van Laarhoven **Saturday, June 28, 2014**



When I heard that Alon Nechushtan had a new album out, I was quite curious to hear it. I had been quite impressed by Alon's two previous album, "Words Beyond" (2011) and "Ritual Fire" (2013).

"Venture Bound" was indeed a nice surprise. Besides Alon Nechushtan (piano), the album features Donny McCaslin and John Ellis on tenor saxophones, Chris Lighcap on bass and Adam Cruz on drums. Special guests include

Duane Eubanks on trumpet, Roggerio Boccato on percussion and Brahim Brigbane on oud. There's a lot of variation in the instrumentation and in the compositions, yet the sound is very coherent.

In the liner notes, Alon explains: "*Venture Bound is without a doubt my most personal album to date, a culmination of my New York years, drawing from an eclectic pallet of sounds, people, places; a continuous journey through a New York night seeking adventure; seek and you will find dive bars with basement jams, old school uptown swing clubs, while crossing the bridge to Brooklyn's playground turns the trip into a joy ride.*"

An excellent album. Out on the Enja Records label.

Alon Nechushtan's website :

<http://musicalon.com/>

UNITED MUTATIONS:

<http://united-mutations.blogspot.com/>

Upstairs at Vitello's  
Jazz and Supper Club

4349 Tujunga Avenue, Studio City, CA 91604  
818.769.0905


## Alon Nechushtan & Venture Bound Quartet

DATE: July 11, 2014

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**Friday, July 11th 8:00 PM / \$20.00**



**ALON NECHUSHTAN  
& VENTURE BOUND QUARTET**

ALON NECHUSHTAN • BRIAN WALSH  
DAVID TRANCHINA • CHRIS WABICH

**FRIDAY JULY 11TH**

 TicketWeb.com | VitellosRestaurant.com | \$20 | 8PM  
818-769-0905 | 4349 Tujunga Ave. Studio City   

**ALON NECHUSHTAN'S** music adventures has brought him to far corners such as the Yokohama Festival Japan with his contemporary compositions, The Sao Paolo Jewish Music Festival with his group Talat, Toronto and Montreal with his Trio Words Beyond, the Tel Aviv New Music Biennale with his music for Double Quartet. Resident of New York City, Alon has performed as a pianist in venues such as Carnegie Hall, Central Park Summer Stage, The Blue Note Jazz Club and Jazz at Lincoln Center frequently with his projects as a band leader of various groups or as an in demand sideman.

Alon has performed with Essiet Essiet, John Benitez, William Parker, Frank London, Bob Moses, Ben Allison, Donny McCaslin, John Ellis, Anat Cohen, Francisco Mela, Chris Cheek, Chris Speed, Sam Newsome, and many New York City greats including appearance with Frank London's trio (with Marcus Rojaz and Frank London), Baye Kouyate and his Afro Beat Ensemble featuring Emilio Valdez, Alicia Sviagals Klezmer Quartet with Larry Eagle, Kenny Wollesen's Himalayas with Ben Goldberg and other guests. Recording Cds for Tzadik collaborating legendary producer Bill Laswell, Ayler Records (Sweden), Future Classics, (Netherlands), Creative Sources (Portugal), Challenge (Germany).

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## **BRIAN WALSH**

Mr. Walsh frequently performs with such diverse groups as Wild up Modern Music Collective, gnarwhallaby, The New Century Players, The California E.A.R. Unit and is a member of Creative Underground Los Angeles. He also leads Walsh Set Trio, a jazz ensemble focusing on the performance of his own compositions. Performances have taken Walsh to Japan, Canada, Italy, England, the Netherlands, Iceland, and all over the United States.

Earlier this year Mr. Walsh, as a member of the contemporary music ensemble gnarwhallaby, gave the premier of Nicholas Deyoe's Lullaby 4 at Carnegie Hall. Their Carnegie Hall performance was described as "startlingly versatile" by the New York Times. Mr. Walsh was also recently a guest artist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic's Green Umbrella new music series at Walt Disney Concert Hall. He has premiered pieces by Luigi Nono, Anne LeBaron, Girard Grisey, James Newton, Andrew Nathaniel McIntosh, Tom Johnson and many others. Past collaborators have included Peter Maxwell Davies, Meredith Monk, Gavin Bryars, Bobby Bradford, Nels Cline, Bright Eyes, San Fermin, James Newton, and Muhal Richard Abrams.

## **DAVID TRANCHINA**

Bassist, Composer, and Educator, David Tranchina is a bassist known for his big warm sound, solid groove and inventive melodic solos. Originally from Forestville, California, he started playing bass at age 13, and was self taught until he began studies with Classical bass virtuoso Barry Green at UC Santa Cruz where he earned his Bachelor's Degree in Music. Other influences and mentors are Larry Koonse, Joe LaBarbara, Vinny Golia, Wadada Leo Smith, David Roitstein and Alfred Ladzekpo.

David has performed with Bennie Maupin, Patrice Rushen, Bob Mintzer, Chuck Manning, Gary Foster, Gary Fukushima, Kendall Kay, Matt Otto, Nate Wood (of Kneebody), Lorca Hart, Bobby Watson (of Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers), Mike Barone (Composer for The Tonight Show Band), Butch Morris, William Winant, Smith Dobson, Vinny Golia, Larry Koonse, and Joe LaBarbara. David has played some of the top jazz venues in Los Angeles, including The Blue Whale, The Jazz Bakery, Catalina's, Vibrato, The Mint, Charlie O's, Vitellos, and REDCAT and LACMA, recording on many albums in some of LA's best studios including Capitol Records, The Firehouse Studio, Killzone Studio, TV Tray Studios, The Hobbyshop, and Catasonic Studios.

## **CHRIS WABICH**

From Los Angeles, Chris Wabich is known as a versatile and original voice on the drumset. The variety of artists he works with reflects his diversity as both musician and producer. His drumming is heard with Ludacris, Sting, Leonard Cohen, Stanley Jordan, Brian Johnson (AC/DC) Sheila E., Mark Murphy, the Zappa Family, Larry Koonse, Turkish superstar Omar Faruk, Boogie Sharpe, Prog Rock legends Kevin Ayers (Soft Machine), Mike Hoffman (Tony Williams Lifetime), Richard Sinclair (Caravan). A few soundtracks include "Malcolm in the Middle", "American Idol", "Better Homes and Gardens", and "Wild California" IMAX.

More recently, Chris has been arranging and producing projects including Billboard charting hits for Margo Rey/John Oats (of Hall and Oats), Ty Taylor from Vintage Trouble, and the Beatles show, "Both". This year launches a new series of intense production and songwriting with Jenny Ing under the name BichNG productions.

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explores the intricate elements and virtuous expressions of modern jazz & beyond

## Alon Nechushtan I

### VENTURE BOUND [06/13/2014](#) by [Rob Young](#)

Born in *Tel Aviv*, the gifted pianist/composer *Alon Nechushtan* pulls from the shades of a diverse palette to score his most ambitious yet provocative recording to date aptly titled “*Venture Bound*.” While knitted in the fabric a creative structure coupled with international influences this project is accompanied by a cast of highly acclaimed musicians available to bring life to this persuasive canvas of music features: *Donny McCaslin* (tenor saxophone), *John Ellis* (tenor saxophone), *Chris Lightcap* (bass) and *Adam Cruz* (drums) with guests performances by *Duane Eubanks* (trumpet), *Roggerio Boccato* (percussion) and *Brahim Brigbane* (oud).

With nine compositions on hand, Alon opens the gate with the audacious “*L’Avventura*” (based on a 1960 *Italian Film*). Therefore, this mid-tempo bop infected piece holds its own sonically as the player’s collaborative voices are stretched and bent to expand their cohesive signatures. Followed by “*The Gratitude Suite*,” the ensemble plunges deeper into the origins of jazz to assure even the most discriminating listeners this seemingly unfamiliar voice is convincing while grafted well within the architecture jazz to create just the right atmosphere expected in this style of music.

The momentum of Venture continues to spin with fluent bopalicious flavors employed in the chasm of “*Pome (Grenades)*.” In fact, the ensemble’s interplay burns with a definitive rhythmic symmetry underscored to display their aptitude for playing jazz simply marvels at this juncture which deserves repeated listens. “*Dark Damsel*” is a Sephardic piece crafted with the sobering timbre and impressions enunciated by bandmate Brahim Fribgane’s unique sound expressed through the oud.

Thus far, this journey is undoubtedly well-worth taking because with each composition you can expect the unexpected because there’s a distinctive tone resonating through these smartly shaped tones and melodies. “*Sneak Peak*,” is another gem quilted in the landscape of marvelous recording. Its poignant attributes encompass the multiplicity of lucid melodies and sculpted expressions are formed perfectly.

As anticipated, “*Haunted Blues*” inhabits a wealth of his spirited fluidity solidified in his approach compositionally simply surpasses my expectations. Perhaps, I find the plush “*Snow-Flow*” quite endearing as well, which is my favorite piece woven in this wonderful hodgepodge of music created by Nechushtan. Alon’s savvy yet ardent signature is couched perfectly to exhibit his passion as composer and gifted musician.

Subsequently, my initial encounter with Alon’s music was “*Words Beyond*,” although I was intrigued by his engaging trio setting I find “*Venture Bound*” more mature compositionally as he broadens his scope substantially as an artist. Alon Nechushtan is proving his music is not to be ignored. In fact, he’s positioned his voice as one to reckon with as a prolific artist.

**Rob Young | Album Review | Flux Media**

Discover more about this artist, visit [musicalon.com](http://musicalon.com)

# Improvisation

West Virginia's Jazz Newsletter for February 2015

## Marshall Keys Sells Out In 10 Days Waiting List Started For 2nd Performance



**Marshall Keys**

The Marshall Keys and The Cool Cats jazz show scheduled for Friday, April 17, at Washington Square in Clarksburg sold out in just ten days.

In response to the demand, a waiting list has been established for a second performance the next evening, on Saturday, April 18.

Washington Square, the longtime Clarksburg pizzeria that doubles as a jazz haunt, has agreed to host the band for a second night if there is sufficient interest.

Tickets are \$35 for one of just 30 to be sold. An individual who joins the West Virginia Jazz Society for \$36 per year receives one free ticket and then, as a member, is eligible to purchase tickets for just \$30 each.

At least 30 paid reservations must be made by March 17 to secure the April 18 show. To order tickets or memberships, phone 304-269-3683 or email: WVJazzSociety@aol.com.

## Cultural Foundation & Wesleyan College Sponsor Jazz Academy

Two dozen high school and college students, and one middle school jazz student, participated in the sixth annual West Virginia Winter Jazz Academy on Saturday, January 24, at Bridgeport Conference Center. The Clarksburg-Harrison Cultural Foundation and West Virginia Wesleyan College provide funding for the classes, mentoring and performance opportunities that make up the day long event.

The West Virginia Jazz Society has been recognized by the National Endowment for the Arts as a Certified Jazz Educator and Presenter. This year, the presenting faculty was especially worthy of the NEA endorsement with instruction provided by Vince Lewis, a prominent East Coast guitarist, and Victor Dvoskin, the respected Russian bassist from Lynchburg, Virginia. The curriculum was developed and led by Phil Wyatt and Mark Cappellini, veteran West Virginia music educators. There is never a charge for WVJS educational programming, and all programs are held in convenient and accessible facilities.

## Respect Thy Jazz Fan Neighbors

After several years of experimenting with various methods of rowdy crowd control, the West Virginia Jazz Society has settled on a Courtesy Policy to be recommended to venues presenting live jazz.

Simply asking an individual to please respect their neighbor's right to hear the music without distraction did not work well, and occasionally led to conflicts.

Having a real big guy deliver the request didn't work any better, and sometimes seemed to make it worse, as the rowdy one would try to prove it was cool to be loud and obnoxious.

After researching what other groups did to keep the focus on the music, the West Virginia Jazz Society has adopted the following policy, effective wherever a venue wants to do a better job of presenting the music and developing a loyal clientele.

The WVJS policy is based on the one established by Bethesda Blues & Jazz in Bethesda, Maryland, a refurbished theatre offering dinner shows and other performances on a regular basis to a regional audience.

Here is the new policy.

### **COURTESY POLICY**

The West Virginia Jazz Society kindly requests that, out of respect for the performers and fellow patrons, conversation be kept to an absolute minimum and voices kept to a whisper while artists are on stage and performing.

## From Russia With Love

They had known each other 25 years ago and ten thousand miles away in the former Soviet Union, but when Victor Dvoskin and Misha Tsiganov saw each other across the busy American lobby, it was as if the two old comrades had never been apart.

A not-so-uncommon scene for Grand Central Terminal, perhaps, but when the reunion happens in the entrance hall of the Bridgeport Conference Center (BCC) in Bridgeport, West Virginia, a bit of explanation is needed.



Victor Dvoskin and Misha Tsiganov

Dvoskin and Tsiganov are both native Russian jazz musicians who became mutual admirers a quarter century ago when Dvoskin was an established bassist and bandleader, and Tsiganov was a jazz piano prodigy. Tsiganov followed Dvoskin's band, Allegro, whenever he got the chance, and over time, they developed a friendship, albeit one interrupted by fate and opportunity as their careers led them out of Russia and to the United States.

Dvoskin ended up in the Washington, DC jazz scene teaching at Virginia Commonwealth University and picking up live gigs and recording session work. Tsiganov settled in New York City, where he performs with a wide variety of bands, and tours extensively.

Their reconnection in Bridgeport happened when they were booked independently of each other to perform with different bands during Winter Jazz Weekend, held in Bridgeport each January in BCC.

Dvoskin was hired by the West Virginia Jazz Society to perform with the opening band on Friday night and to teach in the Winter Jazz Academy on Saturday morning. Tsiganov was one of the PUSH septet lead by NYC trumpeter, Eddie Allen, and the featured band both nights.

The "sound check" is held an hour or two before the bands start playing, and that's when the two old friends saw each other, almost to their disbelief, but to their immediate joy.

They visited in the "green room" between shows, spending too little time catching up, exchanging their latest CDs, and sharing their plans for the future.

Julie Perine of Connect-Bridgeport, the area's e-newspaper, learned of the reunion and plans to contact each of the jazz artists for a future feature. Improvisation, will, with permission, reprint that feature when it appears.

**Summer Jazz Stroll**

Friday, June 19, 2015

Clarksburg, WV

## BLUE NOTES

One musician we know characterizes the crowds for whom he performs. Some, he says, are there for the music and some are there to socialize; the rest are oblivious.

That seems to sum up pretty well the various audiences we see at WVJS events. The vast majority are into the music, but not all. The *socializers* could do their thing anywhere and at anytime, and if given some coaching, they can be brought over to the music side, and start to dig what's going down.

It's a fact that about 15% of people don't get music and don't understand what all the fuss is about. We have seen individuals walk up to a band in the middle of their set and just stand there and stare at the musicians as if they were visiting a zoo.

Jazz is a niche market, and it is for these jazz fans that we've been working with venues to adapt what they do to what works best for the performance.

One place dimmed their lighting, rearranged their seating, and put up pipe and drape to create an intimate listening environment while preserving service aisles.

It took a couple of "practice gigs" to get it all worked out, and judged by audience reaction, the changes worked out well.

Stay tuned.

**Do Not Miss!**  
**The Grey Agents**

February 21 @ 8pm

**Main St. Café**

331 W. Main St Clarksburg, WV

## Many Contribute To WV Jazz Society Programs

Every event in which the West Virginia Jazz Society participates involves a small army of volunteers and vendors to put on what is hopefully an evening of seamless entertainment of the highest order.

Until one sees the action from inside the venue and behind the curtain, it is not apparent that much more happens than just a band playing some songs.

Of course, none of that happens without the financial support provided by local government, arts organizations, and, increasingly, area Convention and Visitors Bureaus.

The recent Holiday Jazz Stroll in Clarksburg, and the just completed Winter Jazz Weekend are perfect examples of events supported by a broad coalition of vested partners.

The biggest funders were the event sponsors, Clarksburg Uptown, Inc. and the Bridgeport Arts Council, who provided five-figure backing to insure the artists were top notch. Right behind them were the Harrison County Commission and the CVBs. In Clarksburg, the CVB and City government participated as one entity in providing assistance, both financial and physical.

The primary arts group to sponsor was the Clarksburg-Harrison Cultural Foundation, along with a host of smaller contributors.

We will pay tribute to the tireless arts volunteers and friendly vendors in the March and April issues of Improvisation.

### Special Thanks To

## BANDLAND

154 E. Pike St. Clarksburg, WV 304 622 1171

For invaluable support and management of the very difficult task of staging six acts on two nights for Winter Jazz Weekend. We could not do it without Evan Jones and Bandland.

### Disclaimer

We sure don't want to, but sometimes we make mistakes, so no phone number, address or other piece of information herein should be taken to be certifiably accurate.

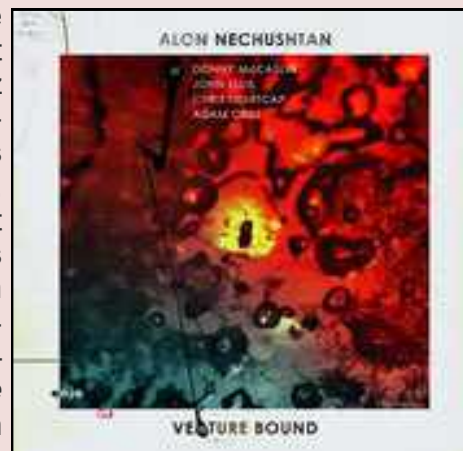
Think of the typographical errors, the misspellings and the just plain wrong as "blue notes" that provide you with a chance to improvise.

## REVIEW OF THE MONTH

### Alon Nechushtan's *Venture Bound*

By Thomas Conrad

The single most salient fact about current jazz is its ongoing globalization. Jazz is an open-ended, self-renewing art form that draws strength from sources far outside itself. Example: *Venture Bound* by Alon Nechushtan.



It is hardcore, up-to-the-minute small-ensemble jazz with a unique sonic signature.

Nechushtan's nine original compositions are angular, meticulous and engaging. On "The Gratitude Suite," the formal chiming of his piano introduction is overtaken by wheeling klezmer rhythms when the band kicks in. On "Dark Damsel," Brahim Brigbane's fidgeting loud, old and exotic and Middle Eastern, creates sinuous counterpoint with Nechushtan's freeform 21st-century piano. "Pome (grenades)" starts as a headlong thrust, but then it careens back on itself, like a Balkan circle dance.

Pianist Alon Nechushtan was born and grew up in Tel Aviv, Israel. He now lives in New York, where he has internalized its unforgiving energy.

He characterizes his album as "a continuous journey through a New York night seeking adventure."

Two of the city's most steadfast saxophonists, Donny McCaslin and John Ellis, play on alternate tracks. Both McCaslin and Ellis take their time and sweat the details. Nechushtan himself is so embedded in the album concept that you are less aware of him as a soloist than as an intelligence that ties everything together.

But in fact his individual piano statements are varied, concise and complete, sometimes twisting long, fine strands ("F.A.Q."), sometimes digging in and grooving ("Serpentrails").

*Venture Bound* truly feels like a "continuous journey" because it veers down many city streets.

Everyone—including bassist Chris Lightcap and drummer Adam Cruz—takes turns leading the adventure, with their edgy New York solos emerging from Nechushtan's colorful ethnic context.

In the new millennium, many compelling jazz voices have come from Israel: Anat Cohen, the two Avishai Cohens (trumpeter and bassist), Omer Avital, and Gilad Hekselma.

You can now add Alon Nechushtan to the list.

The Alon Nechushtan Quartet performs Friday, June 19, in Clarksburg, West Virginia at Washington Square. Phone 304 622 7100 or WVJazzSociety@aol.com.



Alon Nechushtan Quartet in Washington Square June 19  
**More info: [WVJazzSociety@aol.com](mailto:WVJazzSociety@aol.com)**