



Ralph Alessi & This Against That

Ralph Alessi (trumpet, composer), Andy Milne (piano),
Ravi Coltrane (saxophone), Drew Gress (bass), Mark Ferber (drums)

About

Ralph Alessi & This Against That is a group that organically tows the line between jazz, pop and contemporary classical music. The band has toured Europe and the United States since 2004 playing venues such as The Earshot Festival in Seattle, RedCat Theatre in Los Angeles, Bimhuis in Amsterdam and The New Morning in Paris. The band has 3 releases to its name including the recent “Wiry Strong” on Clean Feed Records, described as “fine-drawn and discerning storytelling.” In Feb.2019, they will release a new record called Imaginary Friends on the ECM record label.

Trumpeter/Composer **Ralph Alessi** was born in San Francisco, CA, the son of classical trumpeter Joe Alessi and opera singer Maria Leone. After taking degrees in jazz trumpet and bass—he studied under the legendary Charlie Haden at CalArts—he lit out for New York, where he swiftly became an ubiquitous presence on the downtown scene. He’s been a frequent collaborator with such notable musicians as Steve Coleman, Jason Moran, Don Byron, Ravi Coltrane, Fred Hersch, Uri Caine and Marc Copland. Alessi has recorded nine albums of original compositions which draw on everything from post-bop to neo classical music. He currently records for the ECM record label including his 2016 release Quiver. In 2018, he will release a new This Against That record on the label. As an educator, Ralph is an Assistant

Professor of Jazz Studies at University of Nevada-Reno as well as the director of the School for Improvisational Music.

"An individualist with a style and sound all his own"....Downbeat Magazine

"Alessi's tone conveys a rounded luminescence, like the moon in full phase..." NY Times

"Alessi has "drop-dead trumpet chops and his music is as clean and airy and sophisticated and disciplined as post-modern progressive jazz gets...." Jazz Times

Ravi Coltrane is a critically acclaimed Grammy™ nominated saxophonist, bandleader, and composer. In the course of a twenty plus year career, Mr. Coltrane has worked as a sideman to many, recorded noteworthy albums for himself and others and founded a prominent independent record label, RKM.

Born in Long Island, the second son of John Coltrane and Alice Coltrane, Ravi was named after Indian sitar legend Ravi Shankar. He was raised in Los Angeles where his family moved after his father's death in 1967. His mother, Alice Coltrane, was a significant influence on Ravi and it was he who encouraged Alice to return to performance and the recording studio after a long absence. Subsequently, Ravi produced and played on Alice Coltrane's powerful, 'Translinear Light', which was released in 2004.

Ravi has released six albums as a leader. His latest, 'Spirit Fiction', was released in June of 2012 for the Blue Note label. Additional credits include performances as well as recordings with Elvin Jones, Terence Blanchard, Kenny Baron, Steve Coleman, McCoy Tyner, Jack DeJohnette, Matt Garrison, Jeff 'Tain' Watts, Geri Allen, Joanne Brackeem, The Blue Note 7, among others. He is a co-leader of the Saxophone Summit with Joe Lovano and Dave Liebman.

Ravi lives in Brooklyn, NY and maintains a fast paced touring, recording, composing and performance schedule. He leads the effort to restore the John Coltrane Home in Dix Hills, Long Island thecoltranehome.org and presides over important reissues of his parent's recordings.

A fearless, versatile explorer, pianist/composer **Andy Milne** has been a distinct and respected voice at the heart of New York's creative jazz scene for over 20 years, collaborating with dancers, visual artists, poets and musicians spanning jazz, classical, pop, folk, and world music. At the piano he skillfully blends poetic gravitas with a playful sense of order.

He has recorded and toured throughout the world with Ravi Coltrane, Ralph Alessi, Carlos Ward and Carla Cook, and has collaborated with a range of artists including Andrew Cyrille, Sekou Sundiata, Avery Brooks, Bruce Cockburn, Fred Hersch, Ben Monder, Dianne Reeves, Jen Shyu, Tyshawn Sorey and Jamie Baum. A former student of Oscar Peterson, Milne was at the center of the M-BASE Collective as a core member of saxophonist Steve Coleman's bands, as well as performing with Cassandra Wilson and Greg Osby. Milne composed and produced the scores for seven documentary films by acclaimed director William Shatner and has released nine recordings as a leader or co-leader. He is the recipient of numerous awards and commissions, including the prestigious Civitella Fellowship. Milne draws inspiration from politics, philosophy, homeopathy, comedy, and science fiction, with musical influences that bridge Thelonious Monk, Art Tatum, Herbie Nichols, Bela Bartok, Joni Mitchell and Stevie Wonder.

Bassist/composer **Drew Gress** performs extensively with artists on the cutting edge of contemporary improvised music. His latest project-The Irrational Numbers (Premonition), features Drew's original compositions for quintet. Earlier releases include the critically-acclaimed 7 Black Butterflies (2005), Spin & Drift (2001), and Heyday (1997). Future projects include a new quintet project, a solo bass recording, and an electronics project soon to be unveiled. Drew can also be heard within the ensembles of John Abercrombie, Ralph Alessi, Tim Berne, Don Byron, Uri Caine, Bill Carrothers, Ravi Coltrane, Marc Copland, Mark Feldman, Fred Hersch, John Hollenbeck, Tony Malaby, and John Surman. Drew has toured North and South America, Europe, and Asia, and has served as Artist-in-Residence at St. Petersburg Conservatory in Russia and at the Paris Conservatoire. He has received grants from the

National Endowment for the Arts, Meet the Composer, and Chamber Music America, and currently resides in New York.

Drummer **Mark Ferber** can be heard on over 100 recordings. Ongoing projects includes the Gary Peacock Trio, Ralph Alessi's 'This Against That', the John O'Gallagher trio, the Brad Shepik Organ Trio, and his twin brother, Alan Ferber's big band and nonet. Past work includes tours and recordings with Lee Konitz, Jonathan Kreisberg, Jack Wilkins, Don Byron, Fred Hersch, Tony Malaby, Mark Helias, and Billy Childs, among others. Mark has taught extensively in the United States and Europe. He was a faculty member for the California Institute of the Arts, the Tavira Jazz Workshop in Portugal, the School of Improvisational Music (SIM), and is currently teaching privately out of the City College of New York. He was born and raised in Moraga, CA and

received a degree in Biogeography from UCLA. Mark is an endorsing artist for Istanbul Cymbals. He lives in Brooklyn, NY.

Press

Wiry Strong reveals itself as "fine-drawn and discerning storytelling."

Mark Corroto, All About Jazz

"Trumpeter Ralph Alessi led his This Against That Band through some gorgeous, minimalist music like "Affect Images" and the epic 30-minute "Evil Genius," which broke down into dissonance while retaining its grace."

Greg Haymes, Times Union

"Trumpeter Ralph Alessi & This Against That set the bar very high right out of the gate. Foregoing the preening, posturing, and grandstanding that all too often mars sets on both stages, the ensemble presented a master class of a highly attuned group of musicians 100 percent immersed in, and dedicated to, their music."

Their set-closing "Evil Genius" clocked in at 25-minutes and was an epic piece that was short on evil but long on genius. Alessi's music is smart, sophisticated, and geared toward discerning listeners. Yet the band's performance was rife with moments and motifs that were absolutely accessible, had access points for casual or occasional listeners to connect with high art that is unencumbered and unconcerned with boundaries and conventions."

James Lamperetta, The Saratogian

"Ralph Alessi and This Against that was one of my 5 favorite sets at the 2010 Undead Jazz festival"

Timeout New York

"What makes Alessi's music so fetching-despite it's various blends is the sense of purity it conveys: music that eschews dogma and it its feeling of openness that extends a welcome to all who are willing to chance embracing it. Those who do may very well find it to be a soul cleansing experience."

Russel Roberts, LA Jazz Scene

“LOOK is an hour’s worth of wonderfully warm, human music. Intelligent, entertaining, and stimulating.”

Dave Wayne, jazzreview.com

“Alessi speaks in a language all his own” John Ephland, Downbeat

"Alessi, a trumpet player with modern sensibilities, uses his impressive technique, round sound and adventurous writing to great effect at every instance of his latest record, LOOK."

Dan Bilawsky, Jazz Improv Magazine

“The quintet has a disarming flair for going outside the harmonic context without losing touch with it, inducing an exhilaration unaccompanied by vertigo.”

Mel Minter, Albuquerque Press “LOOK is an impressive new album”

Nate Chinen, NY Times

“Alessi is a modernist who uses expanded forms, complex rhythms and a broad harmonic spectrum to explore the confluence of composition and improvisation. But the music also flows from tradition and has strong melodies. Its flawless execution ensures the difficult passages feel good, never obtuse or off-putting. It’s edgy enough to appeal to the creative set, while not too far flung for modern mainstream listeners.”

Sean Patrick Fitzell, All About Jazz

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