

Mike DiRubbo: A Saxophonist Supreme

In a jazz world of questionable infrastructure, shrinking media and variable degrees of artistic taste, one thing remains clear: New York City-based alto saxophonist, bandleader, composer and educator Mike DiRubbo has been the most swinging and soulful artist on his instrument for nearly 30 years.

His new CD, *Inner Light* - his tenth recording as a leader, is proof positive of his stature as a saxophone colossus. The 11-track, 65 minute recording features DiRubbo backed by longtime partners, organist Brian Charette, drummer Jongkuk Kim, and guitarist Andrew Renfroe. DiRubbo's piercing and poetic sax tones have never sounded better. He's supported by a rhythm section that recalls the searing sound of the legendary Newark organist Larry Young. The CD captures DiRubbo in a variety of Afro-Latin, 4/4, ballad and quiet storm moods and grooves, and it also features his first single, the radio friendly midtempo number, "Love the Same."

The new recording by DiRubbo is his latest stop on his road to jazz enlightenment that began in New Haven, CT when he first started playing the clarinet in the 4th grade and switched to alto saxophone. His musical life changed when he came under the tutelage of alto sax master and educator Jackie McLean. He studied at McLean Institute of Jazz of the Hartt School, University of Hartford, and graduated with a Bachelor of Music in 1992. He also earned a Master of Music in 2018 from SUNY College at Purchase.

DiRubbo moved to New York City in 1997, and quickly established himself as a leader and a sideman with Al Foster, Jim Rotondi, Steve Davis, Cecil Payne, Tony Reedus, Joe Farnsworth, David Hazeltine, Brian Lynch, Michael Weiss, Carl Allen, Essiet Essiet and Harold Mabern.

DiRubbo's nine previous recordings as a leader from 1999 to 2018 include: *From the Inside Out*, *Keep Steppin'*, *Human Spirit*, *New York Accent: Live at the Kitano*, *Repercussion*, *Chronos*, *Four Hands*, *One Heart*, *Threshold* and *Mike DiRubbo Quartet – "Live at Smalls."* DiRubbo has been featured in articles, reviews, and interviews in magazines such as *Jazziz*, *Hot House*, *JazzTimes*, *Down Beat* and

JazzWise. He's also a perennial presence in The *Down Beat* Critics Poll in the Rising Star: Alto Saxophone category.

DiRubbo has been a teaching artist at the Litchfield Jazz Camp for 27 years, and more recently at the Stanford Jazz Workshop. He is currently an online adjunct professor at Saint Leo University.

As his music and accomplishments make clear: Mike DiRubbo will be a steady guide as we navigate the shape of jazz to come in this post-COVID world.

Mike DiRubbo is a Yanagisawa Saxophone artist, and uses Theo Wanne Mouthpieces and RW Reeds.