



MARK KLEINHAUT

Biography

Jazz guitarist /composer Mark Kleinhaut has been playing guitar since he was nine-years-old; when he converted his sister's folk guitar into an electric guitar by screwing a radio shack clip microphone to its top and plugging it into the home stereo. By age 12 he was playing one chord jams with his friends. Mark's interest in jazz developed gradually; as a kid hacking around on the guitar, he was really into *Yes*, *Genesis*, *ELP* and *Jethro Tull*, and when he heard groups like the *Mahavishnu Orchestra*, *Return to Forever* and *Weather Report*, it changed everything. For Mark, the virtuosity, extended compositions and interaction of these musicians was overwhelming--pure magic. He completely immersed himself in this music, and when he learned that all those musician magicians had a common link- Miles Davis, he worked backwards from Miles' electric groups to Trane and Bird, and from there his listening and interests branched to everyone and everything jazz.

Mark attended Rutgers University as a pre-med student, that is, until he first heard guitarist Ted Dunbar. Dunbar was conducting his class on the lawn near where Kleinhaut could overhear. He was teaching his theory on tonal convergence and Kleinhaut was mesmerized. "I wanted to be able to do what he was doing," Kleinhaut said, "Soon I was bringing my guitar and haunting his classes soaking up everything he was saying, and going back to my dorm room and practicing for hours on end. I guess my stalking him finally got his attention, because he turned to his class one day, pointed at me and said, 'see this guy, this guy is hungry, why aren't you taking this class?.' Kleinhaut considers Ted Dunbar his first real teacher, "He showed me how the guitar was unique among all musical instruments, like a slide rule that could map out the melodies laid atop harmonic structures with horizontal and vertical axis. Dunbar stressed that it wasn't about the notes; rather it was the *touch* upon the instrument that would make the guitar speak. He took the time and care to demonstrate things like swing, tension and release and telling a story with the music." Kleinhaut recalled, "Most importantly, he guided me to teach myself, to understand that the universe of musical knowledge and experience is endless, and to always want to learn. Much of what he gave me I didn't really understand, but it's still lodged in my head and somehow every day a little bit more of it emerges." After encountering Ted Dunbar Kleinhaut realized that music was going to be more than a hobby, so he changed his major to music. He graduated from Rutgers in 1979, after a full immersion in the Jazz program at Rutgers whose faculty consisted of: Ted Dunbar, Kenny Barron, Frank Foster, Paul Jeffrey and Larry Riddley, plus master classes conducted by: Barry Harris, Dexter Gordon, Jimmy Ponder, Buster Williams, Ron Carter, Billy Cobhan, Jimmy Heath and others.

Ted Dunbar was not only an influence on Kleinhaut musically, but also professionally. Dunbar was a brilliant guitar player who also made a living as a pharmacist before joining the full-time faculty at Rutgers. His example served as a role model for Kleinhaut who also decided to choose a dual career. He has been a banker for over thirty years, currently as a Senior Vice-President of a top twenty national bank, and has never made his primary living from music." His decision to pursue his musical career in

concert with a banking career was a conscious one, affording him the financial freedom to hole up and enjoy the complexity of his instrument, experiment with its various sounds, work composing, or delve into the standards without the added pressure of always looking for the next gig. Kleinhaut feels that this introverted approach gave him more freedom to develop his own sound.

Mark Kleinhaut is an accomplished jazz guitarist known for his elegant melodic improvisations, striking technical execution and responsive accompaniment. In 2013 Kleinhaut was recognized with an entry in Scott Yanow's new book The Great Jazz Guitarists, The Ultimate Guide published by Backbeat Books, and was honored to be included. During Kleinhaut's thirty year career he has delved deeply into the standard repertoire, explored his taste for modern and forward sounds, and incorporates a myriad of influences. Mark looks for the spontaneous composition within the composition, and feels a jazz group's arranging on the fly is one of the most inspiring and magical experiences in music. Additionally, Kleinhaut relishes the opportunity to create original pieces. He has over 60 recorded compositions spanning six CDs released on the Invisible Music label, including a Jazzweek Top 20 disc with saxophonist Bobby Watson and another album with trumpeter Tiger Okoshi. His latest project, *Jones Street*, a guitar duo with 7-string player Neil Lamb, was spontaneously composed, utilizing motifs from classical, jazz, and folk music in a completely "free" setting.

Kleinhaut has relocated a few times for his banking job, but wherever he has landed he has been able to find great musicians and venues. He is currently in Albany New York where he has been active performing with Dan Faulk, John Menegon, Harvey Sorgen, Joe Barna and Mike Benedict. During his career Kleinhaut has also performed and or recorded with Bobby Watson, Tiger Okoshi, Greg Abate, Jerry Bergonzi, Bill Pierce, Sheyvonne Wright, Alex Foster, Jackie King, and Scott Reeves. Kleinhaut has also had the good fortune to play his music in Europe and Cuba, and to play a Pops concert entitled *Bravo Broadway* at the Blossom Summer Music Festival with the Cleveland Orchestra.

For nearly 20 years, Mark Kleinhaut lived near Portland, Maine where he led his own group with Jim Lyden and Les Harris Jr. and Mark Macksoud, which was the platform for his recording and performing collaborations with Bobby Watson and Tiger Okoshi. Kleinhaut also appeared frequently with local legend Brad Terry, and was a member of the composers' collective the Orion Ensemble, which included Scott Reeves, Steve Grover, Scott Oakley and Sam Sherry. His tenure in Maine was also notable for his activism; he served as the president of the Maine Jazz Alliance (MJA) for three years. Kleinhaut was instrumental in bringing a long list of jazz luminaries to Southern Maine and live jazz to thousands of school children through MJA's *Jazz Goes to School* program. He also served on the boards of the Maine Jazz Festival, Maine Jazz Camp and the Advisory Board of the University Of Southern Maine School Of Music, where he was an adjunct faculty member for one year. Additionally, Kleinhaut has taught privately, and conducted clinics and workshops at Universities and public schools, including Bowdoin College and the University of Maine.

Mark Kleinhaut is an endorser for the Halfling Jazz Guitar by Ribbecke Guitars, and his website www.markkleinhaut.com has for many years been part of Jazzcorner.com, a jazz destination that has flourished under the boundless energy of its founder Lois Gilbert.

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Soundbites:

"This (A Balance of Light) is without qualification, the best jazz Cd I've heard (yet) in 2003" –Rotcod Zzaj, Improvijazzation Nation

"Kleinhaut takes all kind of chances, swinging hard along the way. His ability to explore and create in the moment is undeniable. What sets him apart is his determination to keep the music original while at the same time having fun."— jazzreview.com

Kleinhaut favors a clean fluid sound, sometimes firing off rapid runs or, at other times holding notes and coaxing subtleties from the melodies he's composed...you find yourself using words like perfect and sublime because that's what your hearing." –Paul Donnelly, ejazznews.com

"...a unique voice...a welcome and refreshing find indeed!" -Ernie Pugliese, JazzImprov Magazine

"...unapologetic, genre-destroying, unflinchingly original music. Kleinhaut's music is a paradox in the respect that it is composed with a certain complexity that makes the music sound like it was created easily" -C. Michael Bailey, allaboutjazz.com

"A first-rate improviser as well as an accomplished composer...Guitar aficionados will no doubt be impressed by the combination of finesse and fire exhibited on his debut project." -Bill Milkowski, JazzTimes

"His eclectic compositions are well thought out and superbly executed...Mr. Kleinhaut is capable of light-speed virtuosity...but he never lets that virtuosity overshadow the music." -Randall S. Closson, Just Jazz Guitar Magazine

"...jaw dropping" -Bennie Green, Face Magazine

"Kleinhaut plays to serve the possibilities of a song in the form of mood, movement and emotion-rather than to show off his chops, which happen to be considerable and technically flawless." -Scott Sutherland, Portland Press Herald

"His (Kleinhaut's) versatility as a composer comes through clearly, with each song making bold statements in its harmonic conception...his level of technical accomplishment is beyond what many strive for." -Jonathon Babu, Northeast Performer

Recording credits:

Mark Kleinhaut and Neil Lamb, Jones Street (2013)

Mark Kleinhaut Trio, Holding The Center (2006)

Mark Kleinhaut Trio with Bobby Watson, A Balance of Light (2003)

Mark Kleinhaut Trio with Tiger Okoshi, Chasing Tales (2001)

Mark Kleinhaut Trio, Secrets of Three (2000)

Mark Kleinhaut, Amphora (1999)

Sam Sherry (with Bill Pierce and Scott Reeves), The Prophet (2007)

Sam Sherry, We'll See (1999)

Jennifer Porter, Hyacinth Boy Blue (1998)

Jazzin' Maine Christmas (1995)

Tracey MacLean Trio, Real (2007)

Tracey MacLean and Friends, Live at Crickets (1994)