

Bennett Paster: Press and Reviews

(Updated 1/30/2007)

“Paster, who competed in last year’s [Great American Jazz Piano] competition, displayed a free-form jazz style. His piano interplayed with the rhythm section. The solos were a series of keyboard events.”

The Times-Union, Jacksonville, FL 4/8/2005

By Dan MacDonald

“[Of the five finalists in the 2004 Great American Jazz Piano Competition] Bennett Paster probably got the biggest response from the audience after he played “Yearnin,” an Oliver Nelson tune that swung.”

The Times-Union, Jacksonville, FL 4/30/04

By Eyder Peralta

Critical Praise for Paster, Ryan & Hall’s debut CD *Skyline*

“Let the sidemen have their say. These rising players have collectively amassed an impressive list of credits behind jazz notables. But one thing is clear: They've definitely found their musical soul mates in each other. On their own indie release, pianist Paster, bassist Ryan and drummer Keith Hall radiate warmth, vitality, robust melodicism, and an effortless swing. All three contribute strong writing, and Paster's ballad, "If I Said Goodbye," is a gem. With a nimble, grooving, 'melodic' touch, Hall knows how to tell a story. Elegant.” (***** 1/2 out of a possible 5)

Modern Drummer, September, 2005

by Jeff Potter

"Part of the appeal throughout [Skyline] is Paster's willingness, within a mainstream framework, to take chances. He and the trio sound relaxed, optimistic, vivacious, and Paster's hands have an infectious percussive exuberance. A beautifully melodic effort, start to finish. "

AllAboutJazz.com March, 2005

by Dan McClenaghan

“*Skyline* is a collaborative work of three young players who like and understand each other, and it shows in the music produced... [It’s] a release that is solid, full of enthusiasm and communication, with quite nice playing by Paster.”

Cadence Magazine, Sept. 2005

"[Bennett Paster's trio CD *Skyline*] with bassist Gregory Ryan and drummer Keith Hall features straight-ahead jazz - songs by all three members and a few standards- played with sparkle and originality."

The Santa Fe Reporter, April 28, 2005
By Paul Weideman

Praise for CDs by Organic! *The Undoing* and *Sweets*

Organic! *Sweets*

If you're a fan of improvisational, psychedelic tastiness, check out *Sweets*. Brooklyn's Bennett Paster creates mellow organ work, and also shades his tracks with clavinet, Wurlitzer, piano and Nord Lead 2 using a dissonant touch that would make John Medeski proud. Highlights include "Larry the G," a tune in which the Nord makes for a particularly cool under-water sounding interlude and the title track, which travels from shimmering organ underneath a soaring, Pink Floyd-esque guitar to hard, wah'd out Wurly. Plenty comfortable with disparate harmonic colors and expressive keyboard textures, Bennett always seems to know just when to change things up, organically (heh) shifting the groove from chill to intense, introspective to full-on-rock.

Michael Gallant, Keyboard Magazine, February 2007

Unsigned Artist of the Month: Organic!
The Undoing

Groovy, improvised funk and R&B instrumentals are the brainstuff of this New York city trio. While the key centers are largely static, gonzo musicianship, telepathic group interplay, and some mindbending effects combine for a thoroughly engaging listen. Like the best signed jam bands, Organic! squeezes every drop of polyphony out of their (trio) instrumentation. Keyboardist Bennett Paster spends most of his time on the Hammond organ, but visits other vintage keys as necessary. Check it out!

Keyboard Magazine, May 2005
[\[http://www.keyboardmag.com/spotlight.asp?navcode=312\]](http://www.keyboardmag.com/spotlight.asp?navcode=312)
(Carl Lumma)

Reviews and Commentary about Paster's Teaching

"[Workshops taught by Paster and Ryan] had a huge impact on the University of Arts of Belgrade, and the community music students who were directly exposed to [these] highly experienced U.S. jazz professors and artists. More than half of the workshop participants had never

before played jazz, and at the final concert they very capably performed jazz in front of a large audience... The organizers of the Belgrade Summertime Jazz and Blues Festival extended an invitation to Bennett and Greg to come back to Serbia and perform at the next festival in the summer of 2007... PA Belgrade believes that, as a result of the program, more students will be interested in studying at the future jazz department, thereby increasing the value and impact of this program. The spread of American jazz will greatly enhance the mutual understanding at a sensitive and important time of U.S.-Serbian relations... PA Belgrade highly recommends Bennett and Greg to other posts and believes that they would be of great benefit to performing arts and jazz artists around the world."

Jelena Putre, Public Affairs Assistant, U.S. Embassy, Belgrade, Serbia March, 2007

"The kids really loved the performance you gave, and the response they had was a very genuine and heartfelt reaction to something that was of terrific quality and depth. Your wonderful playing was equaled by the graciousness that you and your trio showed, and the kids and teachers were captivated. Truly, it was marvelous."

John Truitt, Director of the Music Department at Albuquerque Academy, Albuquerque, NM
Comments regarding a high school master-class taught by Paster, Ryan & Hall

Critical Praise for performances and recordings by *Grupo Yanqui*:

Grupo Yanqui presented their music easily and spontaneously to citizens of Krusevac, [Serbia]. [Their music] is a New York style of Latino Jazz with the influences of Brazilian and American sounds... In their compositions, as Bennett Paster says, they do not draw lines between different music styles. They try to connect [styles] together in a way that makes a new expression which has its roots in traditional music... Grupo Yanqui's music inspired different generations of Jazz lovers, established true and spontaneous communication with the audience and provoked deep feelings.

Grad magazine (Krusevac, Serbia) February 24th 2006, Translated by Melica Blitva

"If it were somehow possible to bottle or otherwise channel the energy of this group and use it to generate electricity, the country would hardly ever need to worry about power outages. An exaggeration perhaps, but still an apt description of the heat this group generates with just five players performing at any one time. [T]here are elaborate rhythms and harmonies that take time to unfold and which are played at a tempo allowing the listener to get the full impact of each melody's maturation process. ... This album will do very well and is recommended."

Dave Nathan, AllAboutJazz.com, February 2002

“AMG EXPERT REVIEW: Highly creative and complex original music... Involved arrangements, passionate solos, and vigorous, spontaneous interplay, all with a melodic and cosmopolitan Latin funk touch. Highly recommended.” (4 stars out of a possible 5)

David R. Adler, All Music Guide, www.allmusic.com, December 2001

“Somehow these young New York guys seem to never let you down. On Grupo Yanqui (are they the anti-Grupo Mets?) leaders Bennett Paster and Gregory Ryan showcase their hip, cerebral, groovy originals and two standards in a series of fine and energetic performances. Ryan's "Miller Time" is a hard Latin Funk groove with an interesting and intelligent line and neat solos all around. Paster's "Mona Se Queda" is a tight Wayne Shorter-ish thing with a really hip minor chord sequence, and the band really takes this one somewhere - into a controlled frenzy in the solos before returning to the subtle line before freaking out again at the end. It's into the cabaret or ballroom of your choice for "How Are Things In Gloccamora?", as the fellas cha-cha this one up quite nicely. Paster's "Fantasy" is a showcase for his understanding of harmony, dynamics and tension and resolution and how they relate to composition. Very well done, as is this entirely refreshing recording. The group shows their sense of humor on the Bebo Valdes closer 'Cactus Mambo'.”

Jim Josselyn, AllAboutJazz.com, January 2002

“Although a North American production, the recording has all the savory taste of the islands and the Southern Hemisphere. This band regularly heats up the temperature and lays down a bountiful dose of syncopated vibrations. It is a solid offering.”

Frank Rubolino, Cadence Magazine, April 2002

“Grupo Yanqui is headed by the young New Yorkers Bennett Paster and Gregory Ryan. They play a brand of jazz that is very much in your head. It is erudite and inventive and very, very listenable. These fine young musicians are intent on producing a hip brand of Latin Jazz drawn through the high polish of an Anglo prism. Saxophonists Terry Cabrera and Chris Cheek carry the band from one song to the next, hoisted by Paster's full-fisted piano. Latin percussion is evident everywhere, providing the music with a salsa shiver. Grupo Yanqui is a fine start. It is about time this group be heard by a label.”

C. Michael Bailey, AllAboutJazz.com, May 2002