

**“It’s Funky as Hell”**

**“It Has a Foot Stomping, New Orleans Vibe; the Trio Format Gives Wolff a Chance to Show off his Funky Side”**

**Wolff “Throws in...Hints of Funk”**

**CRITICS AGREE: WOLFF FINDS HIS GROOVE ON “FUNKY”  
JOE’S STRUT**

Coverage continues to roll in for Michael Wolff’s new album ‘Joe’s Strut’, and critics appear to have coalesced around a common theme: *This CD is funky!* In *The New York Times*, Nate Chinen noted that Strut “*throws in a few hints of funk,*” and that sentiment appears again and again in lengthy reviews, seen below. In fact, *All About Jazz-NY* said the CD was “*funky as hell.*”

Wolff tours in support of the CD (Wrong Records) in the weeks and months ahead, with stops including NYC’s Village Vanguard as a member of ‘The Downtown Quartet’. He’ll also perform in Reading PA, SF Jazz, New Orleans and The Kennedy Center. Here are full details:

**April 21-26, 2009 -- 9p & 11p**

**‘The Downtown Quartet’ with Steve Wilson/Michael Wolff/Chip Jackson/Victor Lewis**

Village Vanguard

178 Seventh Ave. South, NYC

Reservations: 212-255-4037 or [villagevanguard.com](http://villagevanguard.com)

**April 30, 2009 -- 7p & 8:30p**

**Michael Wolff Trio with Special Guest Steve Wilson**

Gerald Veasley’s Jazz Base

Sheraton Reading Hotel

1741 Papermill Road Wyomessing, PA

For Tickets: 610-777-2310 \$15 at the door or

[geraldveasleysjazzbase.com](http://geraldveasleysjazzbase.com)

**June 13, 2009 -- 8p**

**Michael Wolff Trio**

San Francisco Jazz

Florence Gould Theater

San Francisco, CA



June 20-21, 2009 --

**Michael Wolff Trio**

Snug Harbor

626 Frenchmen Street

New Orleans, LA

Tel: 504-949-0696

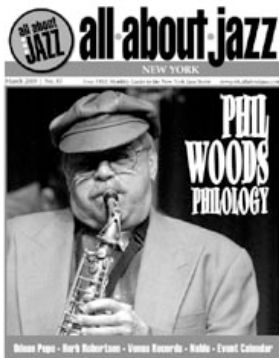
October 24, 2009 -- 7:30p & 9:30p

**Michael Wolff Trio with Special Guest Steve Wilson**

Kennedy Center Jazz Club

Washington, DC [kennedy-center.org/programs/jazz/](http://kennedy-center.org/programs/jazz/)

'Joe's Strut' has garnered substantial national and regional press coverage since its recent release. A multi-page 'Before & After' interview feature appeared in the March issue of **JAZZTIMES Magazine**, praising Wolff as "*a musical renaissance man.*" The full feature can be seen via [Jazztimes.com](http://Jazztimes.com). A terrific CD review in **ALLMUSIC** noted "*the opening track finds Wolff, a master of harmonics with an assured quick-mindedness, full of surprises, tossing around choppy discordant post-bop chords like confetti and alternately unreeling no-nonsense bluesy flurries, the saxes and rhythm section maintaining a solid soulful block as he goes on his merry way.*" In Jazztimes' CD review, they comment: "*Wolff's joy in playing piano is unmistakable and infectious.*" **DOWNBEAT** says: "*Joe's Strut delivers, smoothly and seamlessly,*" and adds, "*his uptempo solos can swing hard, and he has the temperament to leave space where it belongs on the ballads.*" The San Jose Mercury News called Wolff "*A commanding jazz presence,*" and there's more to come, as **JAZZIZ** features Wolff in their current issue's 'Prelude' section, and more.



## ALL ABOUT JAZZ - NY

By Donald Elfman, 3/09

Michael Wolff came to jazz prominence working with Cannonball Adderley, Nancy Wilson and a host of others. He describes *Joe's Strut* as going "down into the caves of jazz and improvisation" and he clearly draws songwriting and bandleading inspiration from these mentors. Wolff composed five of the seven tunes and he has a strong sense of color, texture and emotional depth. And he is fortunate enough to have veteran Steve Wilson and newcomer Ian Young, both on

saxophones, to complement his visions. Filling out the group are Richie Goods or Chip Jackson (bass) and Victor Jones (drums).

It's instructive to start with how Wolff takes on standards. With Goods and Jones, "If I Were A Bell" emerges from a groove intro and is reminiscent of the blues-drenched artistry of such giants as Red Garland, Wynton Kelly or George Shearing. The Frank Loesser tune (from *Guys and Dolls*) has the feel of a killer night in a great club and the bass and drum solos are crowd-pleasing yet full of new color. It's a performance that grows as it goes along without ever losing the delight of the original tune. The other standard is the Harold Arlen gem "Come Rain or Come Shine". The song floats free but

hangs on to a pulse to propel it. It's delicate, impressionistic playing—deconstructed and ever-breathing.

The originals have the colors of some of the classic bands in which Wolff has played. The opener "Harbour Island" feels like a rich, soulful Blue Note track with both saxophonists stating the simple, bluesy melody. It's straightahead with a quirky little tag at the end of the first melody section. Wolff achieves funky virtuosity in a dazzling solo and is followed by Wilson, with a rich, full tone and some beautifully realized gutsy ideas. Young is darker and less brash but is powerful and direct throughout. The title track was written in memory of the late Joe Zawinul, a friend of Wolff's since 1975. It's a boogaloo all the way with some New Orleans movement and suggests a picture of Zawinul the soulful and happy man rather than specifically Zawinul the musician. It's funky as hell in any case.

## INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF MUSIC -

By Michael Katz, 2/09

Pianist Michael Wolff's playing has always had a dark, soulful undertone, spattered with just enough playfulness to suggest that things are going to work out in the end (or will they?). His new CD *Joe's Strut* features five original compositions, alternating crisp trio work with a robust quintet featuring the alto and soprano sax of Steve Wilson and the tenor of Ian Young. On the opener, *Harbour Island*, the saxes introduce the main theme before giving way to Wolff's infectious glissandos, then add driving solos of their own before bringing the tune home.

The title composition is a spiritual nod to the late keyboardist and composer Joe Zawinul, whose chair Wolff filled in the last Cannonball Adderley band. It has a foot stomping, New Orleans vibe; the trio format gives Wolff a chance to show off his funky side. Steve Wilson turns to soprano on *Wheel of Life*, weaving a lovely interplay with Wolff, subtly backed by Chip Jackson on bass and Victor Jones on drums.

I especially like Wolff's interpretations of two standards, *If I Were A Bell* and *Come Rain Or Come Shine*, with Rich Goods taking over on bass. The latter is an introspective, darkly textured reading; one almost senses a lingering doubt that the title's pledge will be reciprocated. Wolff returns to the Cannonball legacy for a rousing sendoff, bringing back the quintet for Zawinul's *74 Miles Away*.



## METAL JAZZ

By Greg Burk, 3/09, excerpts

Speaking of the Miles Davis legacy, pianist Michael Wolff (who played with Cannonball Adderley) maintains an obvious affection for '50s-'60s Miles, along with other mainstream jazz of the same period. Wolff's take is very much his own, and it's worth hearing.

The Miles hints are plenty. In tribute to Cannonball and Trane, Wolff employs the alto-tenor sax pairing of Steve Wilson and Ian Young. He covers the Frank Loesser stage tune "If I Were a Bell," a number to which Davis often returned. He covers a song by one Miles godchild (friend Joe Zawinul's "74 Miles Away") and writes a song that echoes the work of others ("Joe's Strut," which resembles both J.Z.'s "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy" and Herbie Hancock's "Watermelon Man"). Wolff's "Wheel of Life" and "The Third You" milk the atmosphere of the 1960s Miles Davis-Wayne Shorter alliance.

But it's different, because it's Michael Wolff, a man whose recorded history shows he can absorb any form, from Indian raga to urban blues, and make it sound effortless. Damn, what chops the guy has. Wolff strikes each note on the acoustic keyboard so crisply, gets a tone so rich and shows so much fluid imagination, that you almost pray for him to screw up. In fact, the foot-tapping soul-jazz title tune is my favorite because of its imperfections -- the rhythm is slightly sloppy, communicating a feeling that Wolff is having more fun than usual. And he always seems to be having fun... (excerpted from Metaljazz.com).

The catchy title track on 'Joe's Strut' features a jazz/pop sensibility that recalls radio hits of decades past...Wolff's original, instrumental song recalls an era when **Chuck Mangione, Herbie Hancock, Cannonball Adderley, Les McCann and Eddie Harris, Ahmad Jamal, Ramsey Lewis** and others found popularity with songs that reached beyond straight-ahead jazz to embrace an expansive range of listeners. In fact, radio has already begun to embrace the CD.

Hear a preview sampling of the album: <http://www.SethCohenPR.com/player/michaelwolff/>.

Visit [www.michaelwolff.com](http://www.michaelwolff.com)