

Made In New York City CD Review

Reverend Nat Dixon's latest CD, *Made in New York City*, balances an offering of ten songs in varied tempos ranging from Duke Ellington's classic, meditative ballad *In A Sentimental Mood* to the bebop classic *Anthropology*, performed in a fluid, robust tempo delightfully veering from the expected vivace riffs of Charlie Parker's original landmark recording. Dixon pays homage to the canon of jazz traditions and standards set by forebearers like Bird, yet clearly demonstrates his own improvisational freedom, supported by a solid rhythm section featuring longtime sideman and collaborator pianist Denton Darien.

On the album's quasi-abstract cover art, Dixon looks slightly aloft in the distance – a searching, contemplative figure taking stock of the meaning of his eleven years in ordained ministry as it fuses with his lifetime love of jazz performance, crystallizing in his own new jazz subgenre: GOJA™ music, which combines Gospel, the Rastafarian connotation of God as Jah, and Jazz. Hence, GOJA™, as the Reverend describes his growing discography of original songs. Using jazz chord progressions, intonation, and structure, lyrics drawn from Scripture references, biblical narratives, and his faith interpretations, Dixon has blended musical genres once thought sacrosanct and irreconcilable by a majority of church folk and society.

The Dixon iteration of *Anthropology* best reflects the soloist's true essence, drawing upon his rich legacy as a first-tier Harlem-based jazz saxophonist grounded in the masters while equally well anchored in his own hard-earned unique musical identity. The tune offers a bright, optimistic tone reminiscent of Sonny Rollins' old-school lingo, "a horn full of air." Foregoing speed, but never at the expense of his seasoned rhythm section's well-honed ensemble sound, *Anthropology* blends the finer elements of harmonic and melodic intensity that are distinguishing hallmarks of the Reverend's effusive musical style.

The opening track *Back Street Blues*, illustrative of GOJA™, was originally recorded as an instrumental by Dixon on a CD of the same title. This 12-bar blues tune became among the most called instrumental soul jazz tunes of the late 1990's in rotation on program schedules of local jazz radio stations and markets beyond the metropolitan New York City area. The original featured iconic Hammond B3 organist, Brother Jack McDuff, along with jazz luminaries Jimmy Ponder on guitar and Greg Bandy on drums, while the 2016 version features the band members with whom Dixon plays at his Jazz Wednesdays service at St. Stephen's United Methodist Church in the Bronx.

Pianist Denton Darien, bassist Trifon Dimitrov, and drummer Yujiro Nakamura present a tightly honed unit, forming a solid foundation for Dixon's soaring saxophone solos. The original GOJA™ track, *My Lord My God*, is sung in deep, near angelic lamentation by Dixon's fellow clergy person, Reverend Lori Hartman, daughter of legendary jazz vocalist Johnny Hartman, who offers a deeply meditative lament tastefully framed in 4/4 tempo.

The message and the music are set in a highly polished rhythm section complementing the fuller orchestration of violins and French horns. At the heart of this jazz-infused lamentation, one senses the pastoral imperative to convey the gospel message, embodying the ministerial vision of GOJA™ music as a potentially potent genre capable of appealing to new generations of worshippers while retaining traditional believers and those unattached to traditional church worship.

Committed to making a joyful noise, Dixon inhabits his soulful praise refrains, resounding as an elder cantor, a modern musician who, like King David is a psalmist and man of God who just happens to love jazz and sees celestial purpose sprout from its original roots in the form of GOJA™ music.

This CD is dedicated to the memory of Mr. George Scott: Jazz Trumpeter. Educator, friend and one of my most important mentors.

Thank you for all you gave to so many.

Writing Credit: Dennis Day

Reverend Nathaniel Dixon, Biography

The Reverend Nathaniel Dixon, a native of The Bronx and Senior Minister/Pastor of St. Stephen's United Methodist Church for 12 years now is a retired music teacher/ administrator of 27 years from the NYC Department of Education. Reverend Nathaniel Dixon holds three master's degrees from Bank Street College, Columbia Teachers College and Drew Theological Seminary.

He was also founder and Director of the Saturday Music Academy and Executive Director of the SAXRACK LEARNING CENTER, Inc. from 2005 – 2016. He is also long time educator, professional jazz musician and educator.

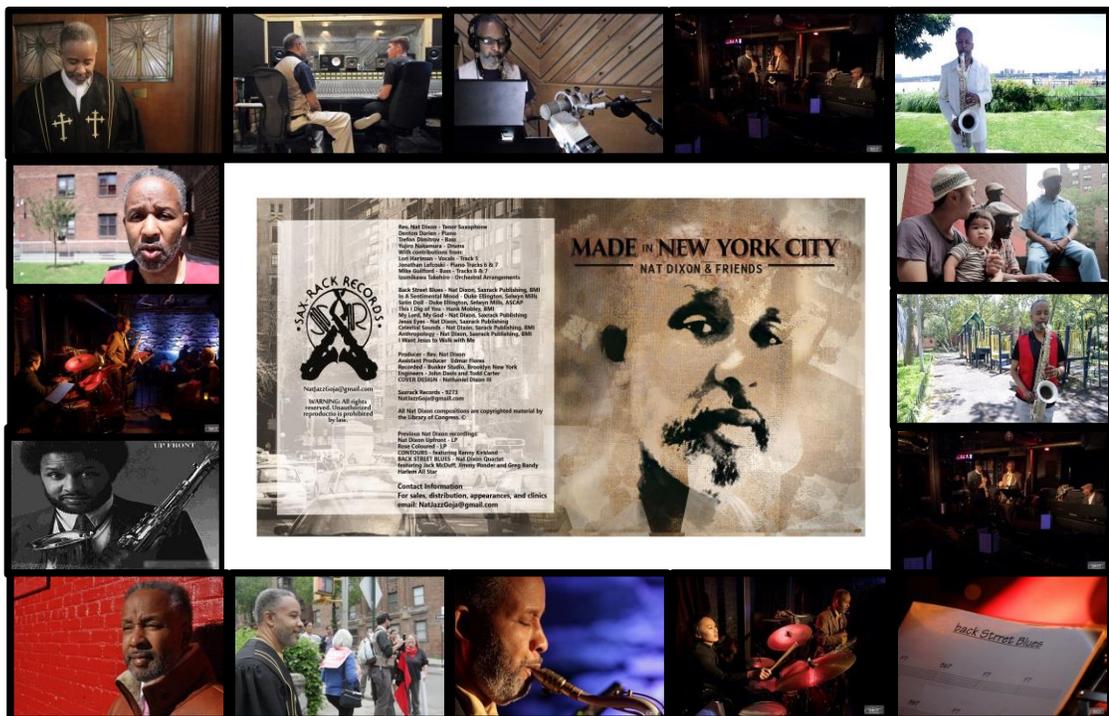
Commitment to, spiritual leadership and educational achievement for all (young and adults). Excellence in programming a positive effect on the Marble Hill community and beyond.

Reverend Nathaniel Dixon is also dedicated to providing transformative learning experiences for students of foreign languages, film/media, and the arts through Saxrack Learning Center, Inc. Our professional teaching staff provides students of all ages—youth, young adults and seniors with opportunities to study computers, Spanish, English, voice, music, and film.

In his first artistic effort in more than 20 years he has produced a new CD "Made In New York City, Nat Dixon and Friends."

Writer Dennis Day posits:

"The message and the music are set in a highly polished rhythm section complementing the fuller orchestration of violins and French horns. At the heart of this jazz-infused lamentation, one senses the pastoral imperative to convey the gospel message, embodying the ministerial vision of GOJA™ music as a potentially potent genre capable of appealing to new generations of worshippers while retaining traditional believers and those unattached to traditional church worship. Committed to making a joyful noise, Dixon inhabits his soulful praise refrains, resounding as an elder cantor, a modern musician who, like King David is a psalmist and man of God who just happens to love jazz and sees celestial purpose sprout from its original roots in the form of GOJA™ music." Rev. Dixon's ministerial focus continues to embrace three disciplines – Education, Music and Preaching. He seeks to find new ways to synthesis all three disciplines into one unique collaboration - benefiting all who take the time to engage in this unique ministry."



REVIEWS:

Back Street Blues C.D. (SR-7777)

"This is an album of uncomplicated, unpretentious, swinging jazz!...One of the most inviting things about this recording is that it provides us with an opportunity to observe the substantive growth of Nat Dixon, not just as an improviser well informed by the profundities and simplicity of the blues, but as a composer and self-determined producer as well. This, along with each of Dixon's previous releases, all self-produced; display his refusal to accept the reluctance and short-sightedness of the major (and not so major) record labels as indicative of his own destiny. Thankfully the matter is firmly in the hands of one Nat Dixon. Likewise, a careful eye (and ear) was applied by Dixon in choosing the musicians for this date ... Nat Dixon is a diligent and optimistic man and the music he plays is uncomplicated, unpretentious and most of all it swings!!!!!"

James Browns, WBGJAZZ 88 FM

"Nat Dixon ... has put together an album of refreshing, straight-ahead jazz. The tenor man's playing is boppish and relaxed; but not so relaxed that he can't subtly nudge the group onto swinging even more. Album covers can be a subtle influence on us listeners. This one shows Dixon smiling at the camera. There is a happy tone to his playing too, especially on his pair of originals ... Nice job all around. Nice album."

Paul B. Matthews, Cadence Magazine

"Nat, you're a hit, baby! We are totally sold out of your CD ... Congrats on a fine recording!"

Gene Kalbacher, Major Record Retailer

Contours L.P. (SR-1010)

"Tenor sax man Dixon plays bebop jazz and plays it well ... Dixon's tone and articulation are flawless even at the fierce tempos that dominate here. I hear some Wayne Shorter, John Coltrane, and Dexter Gordon in his playing, but he's not easily pigeon-holed. He's also mature enough to really create something in bopland, not just run the changes."

Bart Grooms, Sound Choice Magazine

"Dixon has come into his own with a distinctive voice on the tenor sax the standout here is Dixon's duet with Kenny Kirkland on "You Know You've Changed," a Dixon composition as if the Marsalis brothers had not proved it already, Dixon shows on this album that there's still a lot of life in the neo-classic mainstream."

Rose Coloured L.P. (SR-022)

"Nat Dixon has brought a new sound to the world of jazz music. He has taken all the knowledge he has acquired over the years and blended it together to achieve a unique and powerful sound."

Right On! Magazine

"Consistently intelligent and tasteful. Fans of mainstream jazz should find it rewarding."

Hugh Wyatt, Daily News

Upfront, L.P. (SR-001)

"When I think of "jazz" I usually think of this style---cool, refined (but not slick) and swinging. Dixon plays tenor sax with a very sweet and generously warm tone. He also composed five of the six selections here, and they have the sound and feel of genuine standards which I'm sure they'll one day become. All of the players lend great support and take fine solos throughout this disc. This is what I call "jazz!"

Tom Furgas, Sound Choice Magazine

RECORDING ARTIST:

Made in New York City, Nat Dixon and Friends
Harlem All – Star – (SR 1027)
Back street Blues – (SR 7777)
Rose Coloured (SR 022)
Upfront (SR001)
Sam Rivers “Winds of Manhattan” – Black Saint Records

PROFESSIONAL MUSIC EXPERIENCE:

I performed with 1980' – 1990's

Sam Wooding/Rae Harrison Orchestra
R.C. A Recording Artist: The Tymes
R.C. A Recording Artist: The Jones
Paul Jeffries Octet:
Machito Latin Orchestra
Mighty Sparrow and the Caribbean Express

Owen Dodson "Confession St. One"
Larry Elgar Orchestra
Chico Hamilton
Sam Rivers - The Winds of Manhattan
Frank Foster - Loud Minority, Big Band
Nat Dixon Quartet

JAZZ CLUBS:

Birdland
Carlos 1
Honey Suckle
Tamara's
Flamingo Lounge
Mondo Person
West End Lounge

Mikel's
La Famile
Visiones
Willies Lounge
Love Paradise
Under the Stairs
Manna's House

The Cotton Club
Storyville
The Baby Grand, Harlem NY
The Top Hat
Showman's
The New Smalls Paradise

Requesting information or Sales, please write to:

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saxrack@aol.com

Email:

EDUCATION, CERTIFICATION AND SPECIAL SKILLS

2002 Master of Divinity - Drew University
2001 New York State - School District Administrator Certification (SDA) permanent
1990 M.S. Supervision and Administration - 1st selected class of the Principals Institute
Bank Street College of Education
1989 New York State - Permanent Music Teacher Certification
1977 M.A. Columbia University Teachers College - Music Education; Specialty Jazz Studies (Paul Jeffries)
1972 B.A., Winston - Salem State University - Music Education
1965 Music & Art High School- Specialty clarinet and saxophone.

AFFILIATIONS AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

2006 – 2016 Saturday Music Academy – Executive Director, Saxrack Learning Center, Inc.
2003 - 2006 Salem United Methodist Church - Chairmen, Administrative Board
2002 – 2006 Salem Community Service Council
2002 – 2003 Salem United Methodist Church - 'Off The Street' program.
2001 – 2003 Metropolitan Community United Methodist Church - Student Minister
2002 – 2003 Mt. Pisgah African Methodist Episcopal Church; Preacher
2002 – 2003 Epworth United Methodist Church, Assistant to the Pastor
1999 – 2004 Certified Candidate United Methodist Church
1998 – 2000 St. Paul & St. Andrew United Methodist Church - Student Minister
1978 – 2006 Salem United Methodist Church - Lay leader, Methodist Youth Fellowship, Chairperson Kappa
1968 Alpha Psi Fraternity