

## KONSERT

Sean Nowell kvintett  
Joe Abba, tenorsax,  
Fredrik Olsson, trummar,  
Lars Ekman, gitarr,  
Leo Lindberg, piano,  
Metropol, Härnösand, onsdag kväll.

Det säger en hel del om jazzklubben Metropol i Härnösand att tenorsaxofonisten Sean Nowell och trumslagaren Joe Abba kunde komma direkt från jazzscenen i New York och smälta in utan några som helst problem i den kanske bästa jazzklubben i Sverige (den allra bästa, enligt en omröstning bland landets jazzmusiker).

– The coolest club I've ever played in, konstaterade Sean Nowell från scenen.

– ...och det förväntar ni er kanske att jag ska säga men det är sanningen! Möjligen är en klubb i Shanghai lika cool?

Sean Nowell spel på saxofonen är också helt utan tveksamheter. Rappt, kraftfullt, avspänt och samtidigt koncentrerat. Samma kan sägas om trumslagaren Joe Abbas spel. Jag tror knappt jag hört en trumslagare med en mer exakt tajming i spelet. Dessutom en lagspelar, för att låna en sportterm. Hans spel är hela tiden i samspelets tjänst. Till

och med hans trumslöjan kändes fullständigt integrerade. Joe Abba har spelat en hel del inom popvärlden, bland annat på The Tonight Show och The Jay Leno Show.

Att de två amerikanerna nu turnerar runt i Sverige är gitarristen Fredrik Olssons förtjänst. Han känner musikerna och har dragit i diverse trådar för att få turnén att bli verklighet.

Fredrik Olsson är för övrigt både en hör- och synmässig upplevelse. Han slänger av sig sina gamla Gibson orkestergitarr efter varje solo och posterar sig värdigt bakom gitarren som intensiv lyssnare på de andra musikerna.

Lars Ekmans kontrabas och Leo Lindbergs piano kompletterade till en strålande kväll på Metropol. Den senare är för övrigt helt unik. Ett underbarn. Han är bara 18 år men spelar jazzpiano med fullständig självklarhet. "He's a monster" som Joe Abba konstaterade i ett tal till publiken.

Unga jazzgruppen Spunk från Birka folkhögskola var förband med den äran.

I går hade Sean Nowell kvintett lite workshop med eleverna på trumslagan i Örnsköldsvik och i kväll spelar de på Brux i Örnsköldsvik.

LARS LANDSTRÖM



Saxofonisten Sean Nowell och trumslagaren Joe Abba från New York gästade jazzklubben Metropol i onsdags kväll.



Unga pianisten Leo Lindberg visade att han är ett underbarn på sitt instrument. FOTO: LARS LANDSTRÖM

# Aveny bjöd in till en variationsrik odyssey

Måndagsjazz, Aveny  
Sean Nowell Quintet

5. Icke kväll bjöd Måndagsjazz på en för mig helt ny bekant plats i form av Sean Nowell kvintett med Sean själv på tenorsax, Leo Lindberg, piano, Fredrik Olsson, gitarr, Lars Ekman, bas, och Joe Abba, trummar. Jag hade en särskild förväntning i förväntan att det skulle bli en musikaliskt härlig afton. Min förväntan dog in, det var en musikkväll som jag till den övriga publiken inte stor behållning av. Vi började med en variationerik odyssey känd som repetitioner och standardrepertoaren mest färgrika moment som Horace Silvers Sadie, George Shearing, Nelsons Cascades & flera.

Den vidare jämförelser jag att 50-talskvintett med John Coltrane i ny Burrell har stått till när Nowell satt upp sin egen grupp, skapades kändes nära.

Nowell visade sig vara mycket driven musiker i hans kraftfulla tenorsaxspel. Han spårade från bland andra Gordon, Sonny Rollins och Joe Henderson till att på något sätt det följt i deras uppvisningar. I dessa uppvisningar i dessa övriga som ärse har han format en egen formulerings- som sina inspirera till spelare, han undan, kraftfullt och. Han har också en merade tillfälliga som är spelat med honom som Douglas, Wayne



Fredrik Olsson, Sean Nowell, Lars Ekman och resten av Sean Nowell Quintet bjöd på en storslagen musikalisk afton på Avenys måndagsjazz. FOTO: MARABELL

Shorter, Donny Catlin, Stanley Clark, George Duke och många fler. Med den koncentration som råder i USA måste man vara extraordinär för att få spela de här artisterna. Gitarristen Fredrik Olsson visade med sitt läckra spel att han kunde gitarrjazzens historia utan och innan. Han hade plöjakt de bästa bitarna från storheter som Barney Kessel, Herb Ellis, Jim Hall, Joe Pass, Kenny

Burrell, George Benson med flera och smält samman dessa till ett eget uttrycksätt. Han växlade mellan ljufliga ackord och snabba singelstränglöpnings på ett medryckande sätt.

Vårt lilla land har en radda fina pianister som gott och väl värdar sig på de internationella arenorna. I går fick vi höra ytterligare ett tillskott till dessa. 18-årige supertalangen Leo Lindberg som utan att darra på manschett visade upp ett moget och högkvalificerat pianospel som bara kan leda till ett hall, till den yppersta toppen.

Han spelade med ett spänstigt anslag, rytmiskt och kreativt i många spännande soloeffekter. Att han inspirerats av bland andra McCoy Tyner, Wynton Kelly och Horace Silver gör ju inte det hela sämre

precis. Vi har nästa pianist i Leo Lindberg ligger namnet på minnet. Bäst som följt upp honom är Hans-Erik Bergman. Han har nästa pianist i Leo Lindberg ligger namnet på minnet. Bäst som följt upp honom är Hans-Erik Bergman. Han har nästa pianist i Leo Lindberg ligger namnet på minnet. Bäst som följt upp honom är Hans-Erik Bergman.

Hans-Erik Bergman

# Gifter i hemmet riskerar bli kvar

## Kommunen hinner inte nå målet om sänkta radonhalter i bostäder

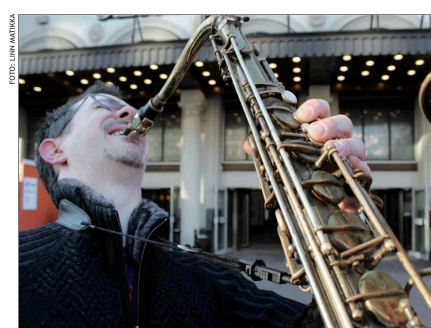
Radon är orsak till 500 persons död i lungcancer varje år. Regeringen har satt målet att alla bostäder och verksamheter ska ha en radonhalt som inte är skadlig för husägarna. År 2020 ska det resultatet ha uppnåtts. Flera av Sveriges kommuner kommer inte nå miljöskydds målet, Ekerö är en av dem.

– Vi hinner inte med. Det finns många hushåll i kommunen och vi har inte kontroll över ifall de mät halten i sitt hus eller inte, säger Elisabeth Svanholm som jobbar som miljöhandläggare vid Ekerö kommun. Trots det har kommunen inga planer på att öka kontrollen. SID 2:3



"Jag är inte ute efter att tjäna pengar, jag vill bara få spela så mycket som möjligt", säger Sean Nowell. FOTO: LINN MATIKKA

**Jazz från New York på Ekebyhovs slott i helgen**  
Sean Nowell är en stor saxofonist i jazzkretsar. I helgen besöker han Ekerö. Nowell European Quintet. Och det är inte deras första besök.



Tv. Sean Nowell liknar det rus han fick första gången han spelade på saxofonen med en religiös uppenbarelse. T.h. Vänner ställer upp med dopplats under turnén. Men livet på resande fot betyder mycket östid för Sean och trumminen Joe Abba.

# Från New York till Ekerö

I helgen får Ekerö celebret besök. Sean Nowell är en stor saxofonist i jazzkretsar och är numera bosatt i New York. På lördag spelar han med gruppen Sean Nowell European Quintet på Ekebyhovs slott.

FREDRIK OLSSON SOM är gitarrist i bandet har lagt upp hela Sverigeturnén och bokade bland annat i spelningen på Ekebyhovs slott. Sean Nowell har spelat på slottet tidigare och anser att det är en av de bättre lokalerna han har spelat i. – Det är ett bra ställe att spela på, slottet är ju äldre än hela mitt hemland. Jag har aldrig några förväntningar på en spelning eller något annat heller. Jag är en positiv pessimist, säger Sean.

Han spelar i första hand för sin egen skull men nämner att i Sverige är det oftast fullt och det är ett av hans favoritländer att spela i.

NÄR SEAN GICK I FEMTE klass så frågade musikläraren om eleverna ville starta ett band.

När de fick frågan om vilket instrument de ville spela såg Sean en stereotypisk bild framför sig av en musiklärare med bant som uttrycker: "Det är ett bra ställe att spela på, slottet är ju äldre än hela mitt hemland".

– En del behöver spränga saker för att få klicka, en del slås och en del tar droger. För mig har det alltid ett år före de andra i sin musikaliska utveckling.

Efter att ha fått pikaren från sin bror om att det var tontigt med saxofon ville Sean sluta men övertalades av sin lärare att prova på att spela jazz. När läraren visade Sean den legendariska blueskallen öppnades en ny värld upp.

Han berättar att han vill att livet ska vara som en berg- och dalbana och inte som en kryssning.

Fredrik Olsson och trumminen Joe Abba gick på samma college i New York och bjöd vid ett tillfälle i Sean till ett jam. Medlemmarna lyckades få bidrag för att göra en Sverigeturné som avslutades på Glenn Miller Café i Stockholm. Där spelades även skivan Stockholm swedings in som blev en av skivorna på 2011 års topp 50 lista i tidningen Jazz Times.

TRUMMISEN JOE ABBA är för andra gången med och spelar på Ekebyhovs slott. Han har spelat ihop med Sean i elva år.

Joe tycker att jazzklimatet i Sverige är bra och att folk visar upp intresse för jazz. De är väldigt musikaliskt

öppna vilket gör att bandet ofta kan spela lite utanför ramarna.

Stämningen har alltid varit bra i bandet och Joe har inga problem med att turnera över Seanns namn.

– Sean är ju själva dragplåstret och det var vår gitarrist Fredrik idé att fronta med Seans namn för att locka mer folk till spelningarna, säger Joe. Det var bara minuter sedan blev av taget i Stockholm, med en rejäl jetlag.

Ålder: 38 år. Född: Wrutburg i Tyskland. Då pappan var soldat. Gift: Med Broadwaysvenskspetskeren Kirsten Wyatt.

Största influens: John Coltrane. "Han är den första personen jag bär på i minnet".

Seans favoritställe: The 55 bar i New York. Favoritställe i Sverige: Glenn Miller Café. Bästa svenska jazzmusikern: Trumpetaren Peter Asplund. Sean Nowell European Quintet spelar på Ekebyhovs slott på lördag kväll kl. 19.00 på Ekebyhovs slott.



ALEXANDER HOFER



# Jazz med mersmak i Ekebyhovs slott

## En ovanligt kall

februarikväll kom Sean Nowell Quintet till ett välfyllt Ekebyhovs slott. Och de var efterlängttade. En fullkomligt magisk konsert, sa en klart berörd Pamela Norberg efter konserten.

**Text & Foto:** Kajsa Norrbäck

**BANDET, MED RÖTTER** i Sverige och i USA – utgörs av tenorsaxofonisten Sean Nowell och trumslagaren Joe Abba (influgna från New York) med Leo Lindberg på piano, Fredrik Olsson på gitarr och Lars Ekman på kontrabas – denna kväll vikarierade Kristian Lind.

Stämningfullt var det när Sean Nowell Quintet intog scenen på det gemytliga slottet. Det tog inte många minuter innan publiken i den lilla salen stampade i takt till det svängiga soundet av fem samspelade och begåvade musikanter. Och applåderorna fullkomligt skallrade i salen när Joe Abba, på trummor gick loss med ett rivigt trumsolo. Det var en kväll med humor, mingel och stämningfull musik – jazz när den svänger, helt enkelt.

Jazz på Mäläröarna, som anordnat konserten på Ekebyhovs slott, är en ideell fören-



Pamela Norberg och Dan Norberg



Lars Persson och Christina Löwenborg

ing som är sprungen ur ett gediget musikintresse och som verkar för jazzens utbredning på Mäläröarna.

Föreningen består av jazzentusiaster med goda kontakter inom musikvärlden.

– Det finns så många duktiga jazzmusiker som inte har någonstans att spela och Ekebyhovs slott är en

väldigt fin lokal att ha konserter i. Akustiken är bra och det brukar bli otroligt stämningfulla konserter – som ikväll, säger Inger Sehlqvist, ordförande i föreningen.

Jazz på Mäläröarna hoppas kunna arrangera fler jazzkonserter i vår, så håll ögon och öron öppna. Du hittar dem på facebook och [www.myspace.com/jazzmalaro](http://www.myspace.com/jazzmalaro) ■





The Beyond Race Magazine Interview with Sean Nowell...

BRM has done it again. We've hunted down, captured and documented the most innovative and exciting artists to recently emerge on a number of different scenes. All month long we'll be running interviews with our discoveries to help get you ready for what's to come in 2010. But to get a complete look at our full list of emerging artists, check out our current winter issue.

Equally soulful and badass, Sean Nowell was studying to become a Baptist music minister while hitting up the downtown Birmingham, AL dive clubs that his mom warned him about. After leaving the minister track, the tenor saxophonist/composer acted as "unofficial artistic ambassador" for the Bond Street Theatre. The traveling musical theater group allowed him to bring the skills he learned from the cats in Alabama to places like Kosovo, Macedonia and Bulgaria. Nowell's second album, *The Seeker* (which dropped this past June), plus the range of his current projects—an electric, beat-boxified funk group known as THE KUNG-FU MASTERS, right down to the Yutaka Uchida Quartet—reveal his truly unique brand of composition and improvisation.

**You came to New York City from Birmingham, Alabama. What was the music scene like growing up?**

Sean Nowell: The music scene in Birmingham is heavily influenced by New Orleans—the Meters, stuff like that. That sort of sound: southern rock, southern funk. I grew up playing with the old cats in dive clubs in downtown Birmingham that my Mom did not want me to go to, but I did anyway. It was great. I learned how to swing with the old cats, and I got vibed by some of the other old cats, and then came back and whipped some ass.

**Why did you decide to go to Berklee College of Music?**

Well, I was attending a small, Southern Baptist college for a couple of years, studying on a track to become a Southern Baptist music minister. I was really into that, that's what I grew up doing—I grew up singing in church all the time and touring around with different choirs. Basically I was going to church at least three times a week, doing my thing. Finally...one day I had an epiphany that I really needed to learn how to play jazz saxophone. Like for real. I had played jazz, kind of, since I was a freshman in high school...playing saxophone really got me the most excited, but I loved doing the church music thing, too. Shortly thereafter I met this piano player named Victor Atkins. Victor Atkins is from Selma, Alabama, about 8 or 9 years older than me. And I saw him play piano and he sounded just like Jamie Kirkland, McCoy Tyner and Marcus Roberts—all those guys I really connected with on piano. I like that sound, and I saw him playing like that, and I just couldn't believe it... I didn't know that you could do that. I thought that was just for other people to be able to hear, you know?

He's kind of like the same guy...coming from the same environment I was, and showing me you could actually do that. So I asked him how he learned to do what he was doing and he said he went to the Berklee College of Music. So the next day I made an audition tape, just like that. Got a partial scholarship to go there, and just went. Didn't visit, didn't ask any questions, I didn't want to know.

**How did you end up in New York?**

The way I got to New York was, the next thing that [Atkins] did, in his life, was he went to Manhattan School of Music and got a master's degree. So that was exactly what I did. After Berklee, where I got a degree in jazz composition...I got my master's [and] I went back down south for about 6-8 months, touring with a Dead and Phish cover band, which was awesome, doing frat parties all around the southeast. Then [I] moved to New York. Here we are...That's pretty much it.

**How's everything been going with your new album (*The Seeker*), since it came out in June?**

Going great, getting tons of reviews. I got a great review today as a matter of fact. The critics seem to really like it, so I guess we did have a pretty good day that day.

**It was recorded in one day?**

Yeah, about a ten hour day of just straight recording. It's nothing but a snapshot of what we happened to be feeling that day. It's a great record, I really am happy with it, but it's just a moment in time.

**A lot of jazz records are the same way though, no?**

Yeah. I have friends that make R&B records that take 'em like a year. It's insane. I'm like, "No kidding, wow. We did this all in...daytime." You know what I mean? It wasn't even 24 hours.

**Can you talk a bit about the instrumentation on the album? I'm pretty sure I heard a cello in there...**

Well basically, the coolest thing about being a NYC jazz musician is that it's like the ultimate music salad bar. There's everything in the world you could ever want to try. And then eventually you make your way around to try it. So I...for example, I play with a hammer dulcimer player, we play traditional African music, and also original music based on African and Indian music. So it's a hammered dulcimer player, a six electric bass player from Japan, and this pandero drumset player. It's freakin' nuts. So there's that's project, then there's all kinds of other projects, including the way that I met this cello player. I was playing a jam session in my neighborhood, and this cello player just happens to walk in. And everybody's like, "Hey, what's this guy doing here?" And he rips out his cello and just starts throwing down. It's really cool because you don't normally expect to have a cellist totally throwing down at a jam session. It was pretty hardcore. Turns out he lives across the street from me, which is pretty cool. Also turns out he's the cello player from Evanescence. He's a pretty big cat in the world classical/pop crossover thing going on now, buddies with Josh Groban and all those dudes.

**What's it like being married to actress Kirsten Wyatt, another artist?**

It's all I ever wanted in my life, for all my friends to be super cool, super creative musicians...or actors, you know, or people. And those are the people that I like to be around the most, and those are the people that I often am around the most. My wife's been in...this will be her 6th Broadway musical that she's been in, she's in *Shrek the Musical*. She was in *Grease* before that. She really gets it. I mean, her dad is a tenor sax player and her mom is a percussionist, and they are both band directors in West Virginia. She knows what it is. It's pretty great, I get a lot of support.



It was kind of a done deal when we first met. From the moment, I've always liked hanging with actors. They're generally a lot more interesting and a lot more fun than jazz musicians. A lot of jazz musicians, they're pretty neurotic about their playing, worried about getting better, about other people being better than them, just minute, minute details—the music or the scene, that there's not enough scene, or not enough gigs ...getting paid a lot but it's not inspiring, not getting paid but it's super inspiring...you get the idea with jazz cats. But actors are generally about just having a really good time. It's a pretty self-sufficient hang when you hang with actors. They're pretty chatty, so instead of having to carry a conversation a lot, which I do with musicians, I just get hang back and be like, "Yeah, what she said." It's kind of fun. A lot of energy, a lot of social energy, and I really enjoy it quite a lot.

### **How did you choose the cover songs on the album? What's figuring out that balance like?**

Well, for one, the label wanted me to do a couple of covers. So there's that. [Posi-Tone Records are] really cool, super supportive. They've been around a while, but they're starting to come into power. Honestly, I feel really fortunate to be on their team, kind of like the ground force of something that's really gonna be big in the jazz world. They're great guys, and I stand behind them. That's a rare thing, because when you're working with record labels, people have a certain run of their record and that's it.

A couple of these covers have a really deep personal meaning for me. "I Will" [originally by The Beatles] is the song that my wife walked down the aisle to. It's a beautiful song, and "I Will" is imprinted on the inside of my ring, so, you know, there's a deeper meaning to that. One of our favorite tracks to listen to is by this trumpet player, Dave Douglass and it's a cover of "Poses," by Rufus Wainwright. It's really great music to wake up in the morning to. Starts out really quiet and mellow, and then builds until you're awake. Then there's another cover that's a traditional Bulgarian tune, "Oy Matze Matze." I spent a lot of time in Eastern Europe with this crazy avant-garde theatre company, called Bond Street Theatre.

### **Is that when you were in Kosovo?**

Yeah, exactly. Same trip, where this tune comes from. We played this wordless version of Romeo and Juliet with a Bulgarian theatre company and toured it all over Kosovo and Macedonia and Bosnia. It was insane.

### **How'd you get involved with Bond Street?**

My first summer in NY, actually, right before I moved to NY, between Alabama and moving here, I visited Europe for the first time. I went with my buddy, and we wandered around and visited a bunch of friends out there, because most of my friends from Berklee were European. So I really wanted to get back there real bad. And I answered this ad at the job board at Manhattan School of Music that wanted a saxophonist, pianist, clarinetist, composer, actor, comedian, acrobat, stilt walker, the list goes on. So I like, was crazy yes...but I kept reading and it said: "...for two month salary tour of Europe." So I didn't care what it was, I just went down there and met with these people...and I still work with them, after 13 years now. We toured all over the world together. We toured South America a couple times, Asia a couple of times, Western Europe, Eastern Europe a whole bunch of times. It's crazy. We've done amazingly and fantastically fun and exciting things that I never thought I'd be involved with. And also some really scary and dangerous things where I literally thought I was going to die.

### **Was this during the war?**

No, right after though. We were in Bogota, Colombia for a couple weeks one time and every night there'd be a themed, giant Cumbia dance party. Cumbia is kind of like African rhythms and Egyptian scale kind of stuff. Which is great, it's a great sound, lots of giant drums being played. A lot of instruments, a lot of horns and we were part of the international theater festival... so every night there'd be a huge dance party with live music in this atrium of this theatre in this historic section of Bogota, under the stars with a zillion Capoeira dance company, you know, acrobatic, kung-fu dancing. And they were pouring aguardiente all over everybody, like the fire water version of South America. So big giant dance party and we went snorkeling off the coast of Venezuela one time, with all these national parks, we went to an iguana reserve, which was crazy and beautiful. I got to go to the Great Wall and walk all over the Great Wall in China because I was on tour with this theater company. I've gotten to meet fantastic and interesting people all over the world just because I happened to be in town.

On the flip side, one time [I got] punched in the mouth by a Bulgarian mobster because I was playing during quiet hours in the afternoon that I didn't know about. I was playing out in the woods, by the Black Sea, about 60 yards away from the hotel we were staying at. And all of a sudden I turn around and big crazy dude is on top of me, just punching me right in the mouth and tries to steal my \$4000 soprano saxophone. And I got told later that it was quiet hours. The mob is the law in Bulgaria. So I couldn't really eat or play for about a week and a half. It was a mess.

Then we toured in Kosovo, where we'd be driving in a van powered by auto-gas. Auto-gas is essentially compressed gas fumes in a tank inside the van. So if you get in a wreck or something, the van immediately blows up. It makes the van like a giant hydrogen bomb. I was in the van, and we traveling through wilds of Kosovo: cliff roads with no guard rail, with a few thousand foot drop on the right, mountains on the left and it's like, a lane and a half. Freaking giant trucks coming directly at you the other way and you have to swerve around each other, and I just about lost my cookies. I had to sedate myself. Oh, and then we'd get to whatever town we were playing, and sometimes they wouldn't have electricity, and you'd hear missiles exploding in the distance. So that was exciting. Also I almost got kidnapped a bunch of times, if it wasn't for the German military giving us an escort. They were like, "Yeah, you guys didn't see it, but there were bandits and rebels lining the road—if you guys had tried to make this journey on your own, you'd be prisoners." And the only reason we had military escorts was because we played a party for the German military police.

### **That worked out nicely...**

It definitely worked out. You know, I've had some really fun experiences, really fun, and some really, really, really dangerous ones that I'm not interested in having anymore. So I'm happy that I'm more settled now, and getting more momentum on the NYC jazz scene.

Yeah, I was going to ask if you see yourself doing another tour like that any time soon, or if you're content sticking around the city for the foreseeable future.

My wife is not allowing me to go back to those wild type of tours, which is fully understandable. I can totally see it. The only really wild stuff I'm planning on doing, maybe next year, is applying for the Rhythm Road Jazz Ambassadors tour—which I was going to do this year, but then I decided to do this record stuff, which is cool. But basically it's a U.S. Government/U.N. Embassy tour, where...they send you to different regions of the world and it's basically to spread the word of American jazz. So that's the only thing I have planned on that end.



It sounds a little more structured.

Oh, yeah—more structured, a little higher pay, more security...Oh, when we were in Colombia that one time we had bodyguards, actually. And we had one really big dude with, like, a 9mm gun, and a little, small girl with one of those front backpacks with an Uzi in it. So that was fun. But we've done a lot of other tours that were more low key, and really beautiful—South of France, without those security issues. The others just make for better stories.

So the beatboxer in your group, The Kung-Fu Masters, is a new addition?

I was doing a gig, back with a bunch of modern dancers that he was involved with. And he's this Russian guy. But he's great, his name's Alex but he goes by KRUSSIA. He's great, a big time up and coming rapper that raps in Russian. Great beatboxer.

I view modern jazz these days as a sponge, absorbing all the good stuff that's going on around it. Being in NY, seeing African music one night, indie rock the next night, incredible classical the next night. I have to live here, I have to. I can't say I'm going to move to X city, where I can be a big fish in a small pond; I have to make my stand here. That's it. I'm trying to make my mark, and the city'll make its mark on me. For better or worse, I'm here no matter what. It's liberating in a way, to know that I don't have any other option but to stand and fight. I'll make it happen, that's it.

Words by Erica Block



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## The Sean Nowell Trio

¡La Oportunidad Única de Jazz Neoyorquino en Costa Rica!

9:00 p.m.

Martes 11  
de Octubre  
Jazz Café  
San Pedro

€4000

9:00 p.m.

Miércoles 12  
de Octubre  
Jazz Café  
Escazú

€4000

9:00 p.m.

Jueves 13  
de Octubre  
Roma Caffè  
San José

GRATIS

Viernes 14  
de Octubre

The Terrace Lounge  
Los Sueños Marina  
Village  
PLAYA HERRADURA

GRATIS

Sábado 15  
de Octubre

The Backyard Bar  
PLAYA HERMOSA  
DE JACÓ

GRATIS

7:00 p.m.

6:00 p.m.





## Take Five With Sean Nowell

### **Instrument(s):**

Tenor sax, alto sax, soprano sax, flute, clarinet, bass clarinet.

### **Teachers and/or influences?**

Jerry Bergonzi, George Garzone, Ed Tomassi, Neil McLean.

### **I knew I wanted to be a musician when...**

I improvised for the first time in high school jazz band at 15 years old. I think my head actually caught on fire.

### **Your sound and approach to music:**

John Coltrane, Wayne Shorter, Dexter Gordon, Wayne Krantz, Herbie Hancock, Bulgarian Mysteries.

Also the press tells me that: "Tenor saxophonist/composer Sean Nowell fuses introspective melodies, darkly hued harmonies and angular rhythmic structures to create a sound that has succeeded at melding, morphing and mixing the best of Blue Note-era small group nirvana with the Headhunters' pocket and vibe, evolving it to Right Now."

### **Your teaching approach:**

Fun. Interactive. Personalized. Classical duets. Learning scales by improvising and composing. Playing solo transcriptions slowly and listening to the recordings closely.

### **Your dream band:**

I only work with people that I would want to be in a van for 8 hours with.

They've gotta be fun to hang with and enthusiastic about the music.

I love playing with my friends that I play with now.

### **Road story: Your best or worst experience:**

**Worst:** Got punched in the mouth in Bulgaria by a mobster for playing in a forest 60 yards away from the hotel at the Black Sea during quiet hours (2-4pm).

**Best:** Playing for 30,000 people on the main stage of the Montreal Jazz Festival 2008 with Travis Sullivan's BJORKESTRA.

### **Favorite venue:**

The 55 Bar is my home.

### **Your favorite recording in your discography and why?**

The Seeker...It really represented where i was at compositionally and emotionally.

### **The first Jazz album I bought was:**

I was at jazz camp at Loyola, New Orleans and they told me to immediately get Kind of Blue and Giant Steps, still two of the freshest albums I own. Truly the gift that keeps on giving.

### **What do you think is the most important thing you are contributing musically?**

A good, fun attitude toward all this. If we are having a good time, everyone else will as well.

### **Did you know...**

I almost became a Southern Baptist music Minister.

### **CDs you are listening to now:**

John Coltrane, "Liberia" (just the one song, over and over).

### **How would you describe the state of jazz today?**

Inclusive. Forward thinking. Open minded. Supercharged. At least that's the circles I run in....

### **What are some of the essential requirements to keep jazz alive and growing?**

Being inclusive, forward thinking, open minded, and supercharged!

### **What is in the near future?**

I'm loving playing music here in NYC and hanging with my fantastic Broadway Musical Theater actress wife and our friends and teaching my enthusiastic and talented students. Also I'm working on finally getting some dates in Europe with various bands. Life is good!

### **By Day:**

I teach one-on-one, in-home private students three days a week and am loving it.

### **If I weren't a jazz musician, I would be a:**

A psychologist or a ninja.



Sometimes the most inspired works come from spontaneous decisions. This is especially true in jazz, a genre that embraces both the structure of composition and ingenuity of improvisation. But the same could also be said about some of its performers, particularly Sean Nowell, a highly acclaimed jazz musician in New York whose first notes date back to his early days in the Wiregrass.

Nowell didn't arrive at the tenor sax like most other musicians. In fact, if you were to trace Nowell's career to its beginnings, you might be amazed that he plays at all. "Our family didn't listen to a lot of music while I was growing up," Nowell recalls, adding that his main exposure was provided by the soulful strains of a gospel choir sounding from his grandmother's church. So when he enrolled in a music class in the 5th grade to dodge P.E. at Houston Academy in Dothan, he was inexperienced to say the least. "I didn't know anything about music," he admits, "but it was that or gym, so I said, 'Sign me up.'"

Even his choice of instrument was spontaneous. "I closed my eyes and imagined the sax," Nowell remembers. "When I got it, I thought, I like making noise." Little did he know that this blind decision would be, well, instrumental in building a rich and exciting forthcoming career.

He studied music for a year in a trailer behind the school and reluctantly continued his education. "I was going to quit in high school because I heard band

**"IT WAS A THRILL. IT FELT LIKE ELECTRICITY WAS RUNNING THROUGH MY BODY, LIKE MY HAIR WAS ON FIRE. I REALIZED JAZZ IMPROVISATION ALLOWED ME TO EXPRESS MYSELF IN A WAY I HAD NEVER BEFORE DISCOVERED. AND PEOPLE LIKED IT."**

was for geeks, and I was already enough of a nerd," Nowell says with a grin. Fortunately for Nowell and the jazz community, his mother encouraged him to continue, mostly, Nowell admits, because the saxophone hadn't been paid off.

Then, the lead alto sax in his high school jazz band became too sick to play at the University of Alabama Birmingham Weekend of Jazz competition, leaving Nowell to fill the spot. From then on, he was hooked. "It was a thrill," he says. "It felt like electricity was running through my body, like my hair was on fire. I realized jazz improvisation allowed me to express myself in a way I had never before discovered. And people liked it."

The summer before his senior year, Nowell attended a jazz camp at Loyola University in New Orleans. There he met Brian Blade (a now-famous jazz drummer who worked as Nowell's hall monitor at camp) and got his first John Coltrane and Miles Davis records. "He [Blade] sort of taught me it was ok to like this music, and we'd sit around listening to records," Nowell says, adding that the Coltrane and Davis recordings remain two of his all-time favorites.

Though Nowell had been urged by educational advisors to become a doctor or lawyer and briefly majored in psychology, he ultimately felt a calling to a career in music. Without any formal private training and with a lot of raw talent, Nowell considered studying to become a music minister at Samford University (where he briefly attended college) and playing jazz on the

side. But while most of his peers were listening to alternative rock, Nowell continued to explore the works of Coltrane and Davis. "Jazz really struck a chord within me," he says.

After hearing about a prestigious independent music college in Boston that offers formal training in jazz from pianist Victor Atkins, Nowell applied, received a partial scholarship and packed his bags for Berklee College of Music. "I had never been there and didn't even visit," he says. "I just went."

For three years, he created and performed all-original material, earning his Bachelor of Arts in composition, and went on to complete a Master's in performance from Manhattan School of Music in New York. But for Nowell, it hasn't been enough to simply learn the notes. He is ever-exploring improvisation and techniques, drawing inspiration from the masters as well as from his international experiences and experimentation with technology. "I take gospel, blues, old school funk and R & B and mix them with complex harmonies of modern jazz, blended with mixed meter music from all over the world," Nowell says of his style.

Though he has many fans, some of his biggest supporters are in his family, his grandmother (Mimi), his parents (who reside in Dothan), and his wife. During the course of conversation in his family's sunroom, Nowell's personality unfolds much like his music, with a mellow, mysterious introduction that develops into an eclectic, intelligent exchange. Bright-eyed and bubbly, Nowell's wife, Kirsten Wyatt, complements his cool demeanor, befitting of her aptly cast role as Frenchy in the Broadway revival of *Grease*, a production Nowell recently joined as a tenor sax soloist. "You know, strangely enough, I think the only music my family really listened to while I was







growing up was the soundtrack,” Nowell says, recalling a *Grease* record that belonged to his parents.

The couple met after working at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival at different times. Mutual friends introduced them at a party, and they say they’ve been together ever since. As a musician and an actress, respectively, Nowell and Wyatt share creative values, work long hours fine-tuning their skills and travel extensively. Yet, they manage to make quality time for each other. “We’re both passionate about what we do,” Wyatt says. “We respect each other’s individuality, but when we come together, we have a great time.”

Over the past decade, Nowell has played various gigs across the United States and drawn inspiration from his travels to Germany, France, across most of eastern Europe, the Netherlands, China, Singapore and South America where he has collaborated with musicians, dancers, actors, singers, stilt walkers and acrobats. While overseas, he has taught classes and self-expression through theater, music and movement; participated in humanitarian work in refugee camps during the Serbian and Albanian conflict in Kosovo; and helped unite clashing nationalists through art.

“Our avant-garde production of *Romeo and Juliet* was a sight,” Nowell says. “The story is poignant because the couple can’t work out conflicts and it ends in death. There’s no script, it’s all visual with music. There were no phones, no Internet, no electricity... We’d strap on our stilts and masks and roll into town like pied pipers with hundreds of people following us in the streets. We’d never seen anything like it, and of course no one else had either. We probably wouldn’t have been able to pull it off if it weren’t for a group of guys from Germany who liked our act and offered us an armed escort.”

No stranger to the combination of music and narrative movement, he has also written for ballet, stage productions and film, including an independent picture starring Nick Nolte. He has been a force in the jazz scene in the States, collaborating, performing and touring with top acts such as Charlie Dennard (a widely recognized

keyboardist and current music director for Cirque du Soleil) and Travis Sullivan’s Bjorkestra (a Bjork-inspired, 18-piece jazz ensemble) to name a couple.

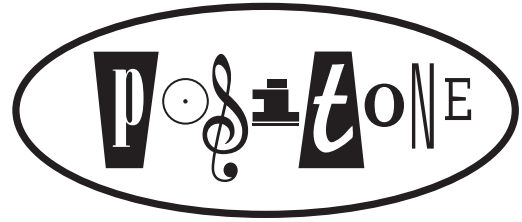
While exploring an amalgamation of electronic effects and the acoustic sounds of the saxophone, flute, bass clarinet and Udu (a Nigerian clay pot drum), he headlines regularly at jazz clubs in New York City and at famed jazz festivals, including a recent appearance with Bjorkestra in South Korea and at the Montreal Jazz Fest, which had a turnout of 30,000.

One of Nowell’s latest accomplishments, his CD *Fireworks* has received accolades from critics, who note Nowell’s soulful sound, precision and ability to blur the lines between composed work and improvisation. His experience and ability to make a song soar has fostered relationships and encounters with jazz legends and celebrity musicians, even with one of his idols, Bjork. “When I met Bjork, I was star struck, which doesn’t happen often,” Nowell admits. “The way she writes is like an extension of Miles Davis’ vision using a compositional and technological advantage.”

Though he has toured across the map, Nowell credits much of his sound to his Southern roots, where blues, gospel, jazz and funk were born. He has played locally with groups such as Far South Movement (a Birmingham band akin to the Grateful Dead) and Sun Rhythm Section (a rockabilly ensemble in Birmingham) and composed an African instrumental piece for Southeast Alabama Dance Company. “It’s fun to listen to music that makes sense in the environment you’re in,” he says thoughtfully, adding that the “feel-good food” in his hometown especially inspires him. “Nothing makes me want to play music more than fried okra and some collard greens.”

As for the future, Nowell hopes to broaden his market by setting up bands from the East Coast to the West, a goal that he’s already steadily achieving. Not bad for a kid whose career hinged on a decision to skip out of gym. Not bad at all. ■





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## ***Sean Nowell bio***

Sean Nowell is a tenor saxophonist and composer from Birmingham, Alabama steeped in the southern traditions of blues, gospel, jazz, and funk fused with the complex harmonic and world rhythmic concepts that permeate the music of New York City.

Nowell's latest release, titled **Stockholm Swingin'** (Posi-Tone, 2011), is a live record that captures him, along with his long time cohort, drummer Joe Abba, and a band of wonderful Swedish jazz musicians playing some smoking straight-ahead jazz. This record adds to Nowell's broad musical palette, and brings him back to what got him started playing jazz.

Musical diversity is what Nowell thrives on, and as teenager in Alabama, he sang in cathedrals with a national touring a cappella choir and was exposed to vocal music from Germany, Eastern Europe, and Africa. He then went on to receive a BA in Composition from Berklee College of Music in Boston in Jazz Composition and a MA from Manhattan School of Music in New York in Performance. Over his career, Nowell has composed and improvised film scores, music for ballet and theatre, 20th century classical music, big band, and small jazz ensembles and has pushed the timbral boundaries of the saxophone by integrating electronic effects pedals. He has traveled and collaborated with dancers, actors, painters, stilt walkers, and acrobats on multiple tours around the world as Musical Director for Bond Street Theatre over the past decade. He's participated in helping unite clashing religious and ethnic groups through music in Kosovo and is been proud to have served as an Official Artistic Ambassador for the US State Department in Turkey.

Nowell has performed with many greats, including Dave Douglas, Rachael Z, Reeves Gabrels, Tim Lefebvre, Donny McCaslin, and Anton Fig. He also recorded with Stanley Clarke and George Duke for the movie "Soul Men" and co-wrote the score for the Nick Nolte movie "Off the Black."

Nowell has been a motivating force in the New York City jazz community for years by hosting weekly jazz composers forums in Manhattan and Brooklyn clubs that consistently



showcase the freshest and most cutting edge jazz in the city, as well as collaborating and recording with the next generation of jazz, funk, and avant-garde masters. His first release, **Fireworks** (Posi-Tone, 2007), was born from these weekly sessions and garnered critical acclaim for the band's highly interactive and rhythmically adventuresome approach.

Every track on his second release, **The Seeker** (Posi-Tone, 2009), is an expression of the fantastic and dangerous experiences collected over the past decade of exploring the less traveled corners of the planet as well as his journey toward self realization.

His critically acclaimed electric project, The Kung-Fu Masters, has taken New York audiences by storm with their FX driven jazz/funk. This band, again, shows Nowell's diversity and makes him stand out amongst the many tenor players of New York City. It's a show that shouldn't be missed.

Nowell is also part of some of the most creative, forward thinking ensembles in the city including Travis Sullivan's Bjorkestra, The Delphian Jazz Orchestra, the Yutaka Uchida Quartet and performs regularly in the top jazz clubs in New York City including the Blue Note, Smalls, The 55 Bar, The Jazz Standard, BB Kings, Birdland, Cleopatra's Needle, the Knitting Factory, and Zebulon as well as international jazz clubs such as Club JZ (Shanghai), CD Jazz (Beijing), Café Plato (Belgrade) and has played the JVC Jazz Festival, the San Francisco Jazz Festival and the Montreal Jazz Festival.