

# Mp3 Travis Shook Plays Kurt Weill - Jazz: Traditional Jazz Combo



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Jazz pianist Travis Shook's first album under his own name since his Columbia/Sony debut recording in 1993. This long-awaited album features truly unique arrangements of Kurt Weill's music. Modern acoustic jazz. 7 MP3 Songs JAZZ: Traditional Jazz Combo, JAZZ: Jazz Vocals Details: ACCOLADES "He has well earned the prize 'Special Discovery' . . . At 22 years, he possesses an extraordinary technique, one can also speak of his knowledge, but especially he frees himself in his playing with an exceptional intensity that he also shows in his own compositions . . . Yes this Travis Shook is a phenomenon and it is clear that they will be talking about him." - Nord Matin, French Jazz Critic Among the super talented, Travis Shook, who has opened the umbrella, can be an exceptional figure." - Philippe Mziat, Jazz Mag Under his appearance of a student with glasses, Shook is a supreme pianist by his maturity, his assurance, his irresistible punch and the electricity that frees itself from his playing." - Par Henri Marchal, Cannes "Man, you're a really good player!" - Ornette Coleman BACKGROUND Travis Shook was born in Oroville, California in 1969. At age 10 he moved to Olympia, Washington with his family. He earned a BA in Jazz Performance in 1990 from William Paterson College in Wayne, New Jersey, where he studied with Rufus Reid, Harold Mabern, Steve Turre, and Joe Lovano. He returned to Olympia, Washington where his family currently resides to further hone his craft, playing and recording with local legends Buddy Catlett and Jay Thomas. In 1991 at the age of 22, he won the Jacksonville Jazz Festival's Great American Piano Competition. This led to his being signed to Sony (then Columbia Records). His 1993 debut album, Travis Shook, featuring alto saxophonist Bunky Green and the late legendary jazz drummer Tony Williams, received a 5-star rating in the All Music Guide to Jazz and was selected by France's Jazz Magazine as one of the albums of the year. He also received recognition from Keyboard Magazine as one of

"Tomorrow's Jazz Piano Giants." That same year he moved to New York where he was picked up by jazz legend Betty Carter, touring as part of her trio throughout the United States, Europe, Brazil, and Australia. After being sought out by Marian McPartland, he was featured on her nationally broadcast radio show Piano Jazz in October of 1997. Other recording credits include Sonny Simmons (WB/Qwest), Veronica Nunn, Reggie Workman, Ira Coleman, Lee Harper, Cindy Blackman and he has performed with Eddie Harris, Chuck Israels, Branford Marsalis, Benny Golson, Bob Hope, and Gino Vanelli. ABOUT TRAVIS SHOOK PLAYS KURT WEILL Excerpt from the liner notes for Awake by Travis Shook (Dead Horse Records, DHR2722) "In February of 2000 we decided it was time to go into the studio, and so recorded three albums in a two and a half day period at Systems Two Studio in Brooklyn, NY. Most of the tunes were done first or second take, with rarely a third and never a fourth. This is the second album in the series (which I fondly call the Systems Two Trilogy). The first, American Lullaby, was released under Veronica Nunn's name a few years back and the third is the upcoming Travis Shook Plays Kurt Weill." - Travis Shook, 2005 Travis Shook Plays Kurt Weill is jazz pianist Travis Shook's first album released under his own name since his Columbia/Sony debut recording in 1993. Why the almost 13 year gap between recordings is a story to be told another day. Why after all this time he chose to record the music of Kurt Weill, the 1930's German musical composer and creator of such jazz standards as "Mack the Knife" and "Lost in the Stars" is a story to be told today. Back in 2000, a friend in the music industry made a comment about the upcoming 100th year birthday celebration of Kurt Weill and suggested that for business reasons Dead Horse Records should produce a CD to capitalize on it. Travis was intrigued with the idea of recording the music of a composer that he knew very little about and wondered if the deadline could be met, since the birthday celebrations would begin in only a few months. After due research, he compiled a list of songs and immediately went to work arranging the material and gathering musicians for the studio. Taking advantage of having such great players together at one time, he decided to also record his original works and Veronica Nunn's vocal pieces for two other CDs in the same session. When the smoke had cleared and they were sorting out the recorded tracks, what had started out as a business marketing concept had formed into a highly personalized, remarkably beautiful interpretation of some of Kurt Weill's more well-known compositions as well as the completion of what is now known as the Systems Two Trilogy. "I really tried to incorporate the essence of each tune into my own playing. In other words, it wasn't me playing the Weill stuff, but, to be slightly corny about it, the Weill stuff was playing

me." "Lost in the Stars" opens with cellists Maxine Neuman and Melanie Yarger interweaving counterpoint beneath vocalist Veronica Nunn's lush interpretation of an old classic. "Veronica asked me if we could have two cellos underneath her voice. I seem to remember that this was two days before the session, but she claims it was at least 2 weeks. In any case, I put it together quite quickly and added in a tenor sax and trombone as well. Veronica made this tune heartbreaking." And when the piano solo enters, as Frank Vigliotti says, "You can hear the stars being sprinkled throughout space." "My Ship" is a bossa nova arrangement, a bit reminiscent of the Ahmad Jamal trio. Bassist Jennifer Vincent demonstrates her ability to deliver a remarkably warm and intelligent solo in addition to providing a solid foundation for the band. "September Song" features the vibraphone of Bryan Carrott, and was recorded at a later date than the rest of the tracks on the Kurt Weill album. "Bryan was in the recording studio helping me on a movie score I was working on (Sara Goes to Lunch). I couldn't resist seeing if I could get him to play on my album. He agreed, so here it is." "Alabama Song" portrays the spirit of drunken sailors in search of a local whiskey bar upon reaching port. "Fans of The Doors will remember Jim Morrison singing this one," says Travis. "As for me, it's the opening scene in Das Boot that sticks in my head whenever I hear this song." "Lonely House" features Veronica Nunn again, with a trombone solo by Ron Westray. "Veronica and Ron really made this tune. I arranged it, but they made it happen. Listen to when Ron comes in for his solo - it's as if he's walking down the street in the 1920's with one of those old hats on." "Mack the Knife" features hardcore jazz solos by Ron Westray, tenor saxophonist Kebbi Williams, and drummer Jaz Sawyer in one of those high-energy renditions that Shook is known for. He explains that he intentionally wanted to give Mack the Knife more edge than is normally done. "It is a song about a guy waiting around a corner to stab people, after all," he says. "I never understood why everybody sings it so happy." "Lost in the Stars (reprise)" closes out the album fittingly with a very personal, close jazz trio sound. Personnel: Travis Shook - piano Jennifer Vincent - bass Jaz Sawyer - drums Veronica Nunn - vocalist Ron Westray - trombone Kebbi Williams - tenor sax Bryan Carrot - vibraphone

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