

Mp3 Nail - Galvanized



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Extraordinary Ambient Jazz Fusion from established Masters of the NY experimental Jazz Scene. Featuring drummer Dean Sharp, bassist Dave Hofstra and keyboard wizard Neil Alexander from "The Machine". 7 MP3 Songs JAZZ: Jazz Fusion, ELECTRONIC: Soundscapes Details: Jazz synthesist Neil Alexander celebrates the release of "GALVANIZED", the new disc from his innovative electric Jazz group NAIL. A professional musician with a varied background, Neil is adept in the usually disparate worlds of Jazz, Funk, Ambient, Electronica, Rock and Classical. He finds a way to bring all these styles together in a cohesive format. NAIL is a tight versatile unit shifting and combining the aforementioned styles forming an expanded musical vocabulary. Their new CD "GALVANIZED" (Pdog Records #00531) features drummer Dean Sharp (David Torn, Moby, Rachel Sage) and bassist Dave Hofstra (John Zorn, Microscopic Sextet), both masters from the New York experimental music scene. "GALVANIZED" is improvisational, rich in texture and variety, and maintains Neil's signature sound and style. Lush pads, screaming guitars, strange synths, environmental sounds and more inhabit this sonic landscape, knit tightly together by Sharp and Hofstra. NAIL's music covers a range of musical possibilities - from hard swinging post bop to heavy funk, electronica and sustained dreamy soundscapes. At the core is an emphasis on improvisation and a solid foundation in Jazz. This flexibility enables them to fit in the explosive "Jam Band" genre alongside John Scofield and Medeski, Martin Wood. NAIL's lineup includes drummer Amit Shamir (Charnett Moffet) and bassist Joseph Pellatier. They are frequently joined by collaborators such as Norbert Stachel on Saxophone (Tower of Power, Roger Waters Band), long time associate Steve Sacco on percussion and electronics, and guitarist Mark Dziuba. And while the focus is on Neil's original compositions, their sets can contain covers by Ralph Tower, Bill Evans, Jan Garbarek, Jeff Beck, and curiously arranged Jazz standards. Having performed and/or recorded in a variety of

situations (Modern Dance, Avant Garde Theater, Film, and studio work) including 9 years of touring with The Machine (successful Pink Floyd Tribute /Jam Band), Neil's experience on stage and in the studio carries over to NAIL performances. Nothing is left out of the "stew." Recently they began incorporating Electronic, Trance Jungle. While Neil continues to tour with The Machine, he maintains the other creative outlets of solo acoustic piano performances and a solo electronic act he calls "Logical Oscillator", performed entirely on laptop computer. Check him out on the web at pdogrecords.com. NAIL-ing it:

Orange county musician Neil Alexander and his group NAIL have found their niche in the ambient land of Jazz-Fusion. - Daniel Lanzetta/PULSE Magazine Every musician has a story, a circuitous narrative chronicling his uniquely tangled pursuit of artistic gratification. Jazz keyboardist Neil Alexander is no exception. His journey has been marked by a number of musical detours, including colossal romances with an array of styles, from rock to jazz to classical to dance music. Alas, Alexander, now 44 years old, believes he has finally found his niche by melding his assortment of influences and inspirations into a jazz-baked jambalaya, a musical stew of disparate, yet harmonious, ingredients called Nail. Originally from New York City and now living in Newburgh with his wife and daughter, Neil Alexander spent much of his youth indulging in the pleasures of progressive rock and jazz fusion. From 1978-1994, he played keyboards in A. Animal, a muscular fusion experiment with a rock 'n roll flavor that was known for its use of odd time signatures. After the band broke up, he released *Alone at Last*, his first solo record. Alexander is a world-class musician, who, in addition to his personal endeavors, has been a member of The Machine, a nationally recognized Pink Floyd tribute band, for the last nine years. He formed his current band, Nail, in 1998. But the original incarnation sounded nothing like the outfit that is impressing audiences in 2005. "The first record we put out, *Bent*, was kind of hard edged jazz fusion. It was a four piece band and it was good, but there was something missing. So I let the band go and decided to regroup." Enter versatile, renowned drummer Dean Sharp, a veteran who has played with everyone from Moby to Rachel Sage. Sharp, who plays drums on Nail's most recent release, *Galvanized*, reintroduced Alexander to a more spacious, ambient jazz sound, and the two immediately hit it off. "I was exposed to ambient jazz at an early age and kind of got away from it," says Alexander. "Meeting Dean was very inspirational. He's been very supportive through everything. At first, I thought *Galvanized* was okay, but after listening back to it several times, I really started to believe we were on to something." The result is a spacey, textural record that is both hypnotic and, well, galvanizing. *Galvanized*, cut in one afternoon by

Alexander, Sharp, and bassist Dave Hofstra, is a broad musical landscape, an atmospheric collage that rolls in tender waves like long, slow mornings, and gets thick and juicy like the underbelly of chaotic midnights. It manages to create its sound without the aid of a guitar. Alexander and Sharp both play samplers to give the record a splash of trancey electronica. After *Galvanized*, Alexander realized he still wasn't satisfied. Nail's new record, tentatively titled, *Tugging at the Infinite*, is slated for release in the summer of 2005. "The new record is the closest I've come to really doing what I always envisioned. It combines the ambient feel of the last record with some of my old, rockish, jazz fusion influences. Plus we throw in some of that funky, jam band kind of feel, which is really big right now. I think we've really found our true voice." Of course, to pull off something this ambitious, the right musicians are essential.

Alexander has put together an accomplished group for his live show, featuring drummer Amit Shamir and bassist Joseph Pellatier. The live show also features some solid guest appearances. Local celebrity DJ Wavy Davey showed up at a recent gig in Kingston to spin turntables with Alexander and his crew. "If you have the right musicians, you can play any combination of music. I used to play in different genre bands to satisfy my different passions. But now, I realize it doesn't have to be that way. You can do it all in one project. The title of the new record is really appropriate. We're trying to tug at the universe a little bit, to see what happens when things change shape and don't look the same anymore. That concept really captures the way we approach the music." Nail's next show is at Miss Lucy's Kitchen in Saugerties on February 26th. Enjoy the melange.

MUSIC SHOPPER FORUM Our Rating: 87 out of 100 Although classified as "Jazz," Nail's latest electric Jazz album "*Galvanized*" is not exactly along the lines of Louis Armstrong or Billie Holiday. I was more apt to classify it as electric or synthesized "arrangements" on the first listen, but a closer depiction did show that Nail does indeed have the fundamentals of Jazz at its roots. Every song has its own style whether it is New Age, Rock, or Funk, however somewhere within them is that old familiar jive sound. Nail is headed up and produced by long time musician Neil Alexander who was joined by bassist David Hofstra and drummer/percussionist Dean Sharp to create the interesting form of Jazz found on "*Galvanized*." Alexander has been touring with the group The Machine for the past nine years, but uses Nail to expressive his creativity (and there is a lot of it). His interest in music started at a very young age and he has produced numerous recordings since. This life long musical experience is evident in his playing. Most of the compositions on "*Galvanized*" start off with an appealing, often ominous intro, and from there Alexander seems to take the music into any direction he pleases. The songs pretty

much flow into each other with little or no break, so these intros are important in distinguishing them. Otherwise, you go from "School of Velocity" which is very melodious to "Ghost Dance," a much harder rock, without acknowledging there was a song change. The flow makes it easy to get somewhat hypnotized by the rhythms, all the while having different emotions rise and fall. "Ghost Dance" in itself is an exceptionally interesting song. It varies between hard and soft rock that sounds like an electric guitar playing, but amazingly, there are no guitars on this album. There are also several parts, particularly in the song "The Winter," where Alexander maneuvers his digital keyboard to sound as classical as Mozart. Very little on the album gives any indication that there are only three performers, as it at often times sounds like an entire orchestra. In various places throughout there are also two different types of samplers; Neil, on one for sound fit, and Sharp on the other that samples them while they are playing, and then can play it back in real time. Collectively, it is an accomplished effort. "Galvanized" takes a lot of listening to due to it's sophisticated arrangements. For more information on Nail and Neil Alexander visit pdogrecords.com

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