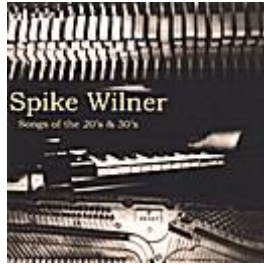


Mp3 Spike Wilner - Songs Of The 20's & 30's



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Traditional Jazz Combo, JAZZ: Ragtime Details: Michael Spike Wilner was born in New York City and started playing piano at an early age. He was inspired by a television program about the life of Scott Joplin to learn to play Ragtime Music. He perused this art form throughout high school and performed Joplins Maple Leaf Rag at the St. Louis Ragtime Festival. Although it was an informal appearance it, nonetheless, profoundly affected him and drove him to peruse a career in music. In his high school jazz program he met pianist Peter Martin who introduced him and inspired him to learn more modern jazz.

Wilner decided to enter into the New School For Social Researchs Jazz and Contemporary Music department, which was then in its first year. Headed by the late saxophonist Arnie Lawrence, this was an experimental forum where young jazz musicians were introduced to masters and left on their own to interact and play together. In this fertile musical environment Wilner met and became friends with many of todays leading jazz musicians. Students at that time included: Peter Bernstein, Jesse Davis, Larry Goldings, Brad Mehldau, Roy Hargrove, Sam Yahel, Joe Strasser and many others. It was there that Wilner had the good fortune to become the student of the late pianist Walter Davis Jr. as well as the late great Jaki Byard. At this same time Wilner became involved at the Jazz Cultural Theater under the direction a Barry Harris and spent several years studying there. It was also at this time that Wilner began to work professionally on the New York City jazz scene. He began to play gigs in the various clubs and throughout the years has held down many steady engagements in well-known clubs. Wilner was a house pianist at the legendary, now defunct, Village Gate as well as other long-gone clubs such as Visiones, The Angry Squire and The Village Corner. In 1995, Wilner became involved with the jazz club Smalls under the direction of owner Mitch Borden. At Smalls, Wilner has developed his music and his career. He

recorded a live record there *Late Night: Live At Smalls* (Freshsound Records) and now currently performs there each Sunday evening with his sextet, Planet Jazz. During his last 15 years, Wilner has played with many names now well known in jazz such as: Peter Bernstein, Joe Magnarelli, Grant Stewart, Jesse Davis, Eric Alexander, Jim Rotundi, Joe Farnsworth, Bob Mover, Ian Hedrickson-Smith, Ryan Kisor, Steve Davis, Ralph Lalama, Paul Gill, Neal Miner, Joe Strasser, Ari Roland, Chris Byars, Sherman Irby, Joel Frahm, Omer Avital, Stephon Harris and many others. Other professional work has included tours with the Artie Shaw Orchestra, the Glenn Miller Orchestra and a European tour with Maynard Ferguson's Big Bop Nouveau band. Wilner has toured extensively in France as part of the Xavier Richardeau quintet. In Paris he has also worked with bassist Pierre Boussaguet and trombonist Sarah Morrow. Wilner participated in two Thelonious Monk Piano Competitions, one in 1989 as a finalist and one in 1993 as a semi-finalist. Wilner has worked with Wynton Marsalis on a ballet piece composed by Wynton and choreographed by Zhongmei Li that was performed at the Library of Congress. Wilner currently works and records with Washington D.C. vibraphone legend Lennie Cuje. He has also worked as rehearsal pianist with singer Tony Bennett and has recorded with Duke Ellington alumni Milt Grayson. Wilner has several recordings released under his own name. His debut, *Portraits*, was released on the New Jazz Renaissance label. He then recorded two for the label Freshsound/New Talent: *A Blues Of Many Colors* which is a collection of original compositions and *Late Night: Live At Smalls*. His collective project The Uptown Quintet features trumpeter Ryan Kisor and is out on the Cellar-Live label. Wilner most recent project is *Planet Jazz: In Orbit* which is out on the Sharp Nine label and features guitarist Peter Bernstein, trumpeter Joe Magnarelli and tenor saxophonist Grant Stewart. Spike Wilner has also been involved in education. He has been a faculty member of the Turtle Bay Music School, The Brooklyn Conservatory and the Scarsdale Music School. He also teaches privately. He has guest lectured at Julliard and is currently publishing a book of transcriptions by the great Harlem-stride pianist, Willie The Lion Smith. Wilner is currently completing his Masters of Arts at SUNY in Purchase, NY. Wilner currently resides in the Morningside-Heights neighborhood of Manhattan. In one of his first reviews at Smalls, New York Times Peter Watrous had this to say about Spike Wilner: Mr. Wilner is obviously intoxicated with the flow and dance of the great pianists who graced jazz in the 1940s and 50s and his lines, surging and rhythmically powerful, were convincing. Mr. Wilner is completely at home at what he's doing and in his hands the rules of an idiom disappear, leaving an improvisational flexibility that's available only to soloists

who have really spent time learning their subject.

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