

Zach Bartholomew Trio  
Out of This Town (self-released)



With even some established veteran jazz artists struggling to raise funds to offset recording costs, fledgling studio acts face an even steeper uphill climb. The Tallahassee, Florida-based Zach Bartholomew Trio needed to use the online fundraising organization Kickstarter to complete its new debut CD 'Out of This Town,' but the result is a worthy modern jazz piano trio CD with a kick.

Twenty-six-year-old namesake pianist Bartholomew met bassist Brandon Robertson and drummer Miles Bozeman when all three were jazz students at Florida State University, and the trio's years of chemistry-building woodshedding shows. The bandleader composed six of the CD's nine tracks, and his opening "Stop and Go" shows elements of his lessons with the brilliant blind pianist Marcus Roberts, as well as the thematic shifts of another modern master, Brad Mehldau.

Other Bartholomew gems include the New Orleans-tinged "Shades of Blue;" the spirited "Lover's Lament," which transforms from ballad to galloping march, and the introspective, swinging closer "Another Shade of Blue," with its throwback stride a la James P. Johnson.

Bozeman guides every feel effortlessly, from stroll to sprint, whether using drumsticks or brushes. His compositional contribution is the title track, a 6/8-timed essay in trio interaction and improvisation. And Robertson's cohesive bass lines unify every piece on the disc, with his hip-hop background applying modernism and his be-bop-infused humor a grittiness -- all evident on his simmer-to-boil composition "Forever More."

The lone cover is John Coltrane's "Lazy Bird," on which Bartholomew states the melody in an unaccompanied intro before his trio partners engage him in what sounds like a non-verbal conversation on the different directions all great 'Trane compositions can take. The creative arrangement, and a CD cover photo of the three walking along railroad tracks, are both emblematic of a young trio that's clearly going places.

-- Bill Meredith, contributor to JazzTimes, Jazziz, JazzBluesFlorida, Palm Beach Post, Palm Beach Arts Paper



**JazzTimes**<sup>®</sup>  
AMERICA'S JAZZ MAGAZINE

