



With the kind of cool mood that brought us Herbie Mann and Hubert Laws, Pacific Coast Jazz introduces Bradley Leighton, a flutist who combines groove with soul. This is his second solo album. Backed by organ, guitar and drums, he employs an alto flute, which brings its gentler tone front and center to be reckoned with on the basis of intimacy. Up close and personal, the flutist's program draws from a wide spread. "Ain't No Sunshine," "Europa" and the "Pink Panther Theme" sit side by side with classics such as "Now's the Time," "Speak Low" and "Summertime." Keeping his focus on straight-ahead jazz, Leighton creates a lovable session that comes recommended for its ease of communication.

Three originals provide a close look at the flutist's intentions. "Carefree" oozes casually with a hip flavor as the organ trio melds with Leighton's warm embrace in a loose, bouncing affair. "Lazy Summer Days" adds a little funk to the formula, as we kick back with a devil-may-care attitude. The piece runs smooth and casual. "Easy Morning" turns to smooth jazz for its delicate waves, as Leighton folds in a tinge of Latin texture.

Better are his hot encounters with straight-ahead jazz, where he exhibits the musical virtuosity that has carried his career around the world with a die-hard jazzman's torch. He takes to spontaneous improvisation as a bird takes to flying. The flutist performs weekly in La Jolla and more often at various jazz clubs in the San Diego area.
~Jim Santella, L A Jazz Scene

"In Bradley Leighton's gifted hands, the panther is anything but pink. The jazz flutist's latest CD, *Just Doin' Our Thang*, includes a variation of the theme from the *Pink Panther* like you won't believe."
- CITYBEAT April 20, 2005

On Bradley Leighton's second album, *Just Doin' Our Thang*, the flutist tackles tunes from points on the musical map as diverse as classic bebop, the Great American Songbook, the Henry Mancini oeuvre and the reflective R&B of Bill Withers. He's backed by an estimable organ trio comprised of Hammond B3 player Rob Whitlock, drummer Duncan Moore and guitarist Bob Boss, Leighton blows on the alto flute for the entire project in an attempt, he says, to inject the music with a warmer and mellower sound than his Brazilian-tinged, 2003 debut, *Groove Yard*. Does it work? You betcha.

Whether playful on "Summertime" and "Sunny" or jazzy on Charlie Parker's "Now's the Time" and his own "Carefree," the flutist keeps his focus on bop and tight musicianship. Familiar tunes like Bobby Womack's "Breezin'" and Carlos Santana's "Europa" get fresh makeovers, and originals like "Lazy Summer Days" show that Leighton can confidently mix in his own tunes with classics.

~Brian Soergel, JazzTimes, August 2005

Wow - alto flute and B3 jazz - this I gotta love! Reminds me of the Ryerson/Beck alto flute and guitar duo on a couple DMP SACDs, but with the added shakin' bass end of the B3 organ and the variety of percussion effects possible between the drums and percussionist. Sounds sorta like a swinging Ivy League Caucasian flutist is sitting in with a down n' dirty B3 trio at a black blues club - let's hear it for diversity! Leighton's rich warm tone is quite a contrast to the usual raucous sax you would normally hear if the trio expanded to a quartet. And while I dig a little of that I'm nuts for a lot of this! Four originals spice up the dozen tracks - three of them from Leighton himself. Two of the tracks, including the opening B3 standard Sunny, delve into a Latin groove and the producer's own Deep Sea is a lovely bossa nova. If this is an example of what comes out of this small San Diego-area jazz label, I want to hear more right away.
- Audiophile Audition, April 2005

Flutist Bradley Leighton's *Just Doin' Our Thang* is reminiscent in ways of Herbie Mann's recordings of the 1960s. Leighton turns a variety of pop and R&B-oriented tunes into soul-jazz, playing a wide repertoire that ranges from "Sunny" to "Summertime," from "Europa" to "Speak Low." The flute and organ combination is a little unusual but works well, with organist Rob Whitlock playing in a style not that far from that of Jimmy Smith. Guitarist Bob Boss is also an asset. Not many surprises occur, but the music is pleasing and is easily recommended to fans of the jazz organ and the funkier side of jazz.
~ Scott Yanow, All Music Guide

Unusual instrumentation sets this CD apart. Leader Bradley Leighton plays alto flute in front of Hammond B3 player Rob Whitlock, bassist Bob Boss and drummer Duncan Moore, with percussionist Allan Phillips added on most tracks. Although rooted in bop, Bradley pays heed to the fluid grace of Latin music and offers an individualistic take on several standards and contemporary popular songs. His own compositions, of which there are three hereon, display considerable talent. Attractive music, played with skill and ingenuity.
- SwingToBop.com, *Bruce Crowther*, April, 2005

Simply *smooth* is the best way to describe flautist Bradley Leighton's latest thing. Smooth in its style, sound, and performances, *Just Doin' Our Thang* is the followup release to the southern California based musician's 2003 debut, *Groove Yard*. Leaning towards an urban and contemporary style, Bradley has the credentials--but more notably the talent--to deliver an enjoyable recording for fans of mellow music.

Some of the key elements include Leighton's use of an alto flute (with its deep and whispery tone), clever reworkings of popular songs, and capable band members--featuring the Hammond B3 organ as a nice backdrop to flesh out musical ideas. The combination of the alto flute's resonance and the B3's signature sound make for a soothing blend.

Though the recording is a little top-heavy with covers of other songs, it draws you into a blissful reminiscence--starting off with a fine remake of the pop hit "Sunny" with a toe-tapping and head-bopping tempo filled with nice flute and organ work. Other memorable remakes include Charlie Parker's "Now's The Time," proving the band can swing, and "The Pink Panther," which shows their sense of humor. On the southern classic "Summer Time" Leighton's dual-channeled flute breezes with warm notes and feathery trills that fit the mood appropriately.

Leighton contributes three of his own compositions, and though not as memorable as their more popular counterparts, they are consistent with the overall feel of the recording, thanks to producer Allan Phillips, who also plays percussion and keyboards, as well as organist Rob Whitlock and guitarist Bob Boss, who both lay down some sweet backup and solo work on Leighton's "Lazy Summer Days" and Bill Withers' R&B classic "Ain't No Sunshine." If you have a taste for cool sounds with an old school vibe, Leighton and his crew do justice to the music.
-Mark F. Turner, *AllAboutJazz*

Leighton's rendition of Gershwin and Heyward's "Summertime" sets the perky tone for the album, and the other racks follow suit. In his second solo release, Bradley Leighton covers jazz standards (and some originals) entirely on alto flute. Unforced whimsy makes this the kind of music that enhances one's listening experience.

The album's mellow sound -- alto flute is much more pleasing to the ear than the higher flute sound most people are used to -- combined with the familiar melody lines of Henry Mancini's "Pink Panther Theme" and Bobby Womack's "Breezin'" -- gives this collection a wide-reaching appeal. Besides the covers, Leighton plays four of his original compositions, including the enchanting melodies "Carefree" and "Lazy Summer Days" and the swirling acoustic poetry of "Easy Morning," all of which carry on in the disc's warm and breezy theme. Each cut is lengthy, the shortest at just under four minutes, and the focus remains on the rich flute sound throughout.

These arrangements by Leighton give classic songs a contemporary twist and portray the flute player as a cool artist with an open ear.
- Mary Montgomery, *San Diego Reader*, April 21, 2005

Bradley Leighton's music including "Just Doin' Our Thang" is distributed exclusively by BIG DADDY MUSIC and is available at major music retailers including Tower, Amazon.com and CDBaby.com.

The word that comes to mind only 4 bars in to "Sonny" is "subtle".... which, if you look it up in th' Thesarus, shows words like "delicate" & "fine". That's kinda' how I hear Bradley's flute here... as well as th' Hammond by Rob Whitlock, & th' guitar by Bob Boss, as well as the percz from Allan Phillips & (even) drums from Duncan Moore. The players are so dedicated to making a pleasant experience for th' listener that their solos come across as laid-back & easy. That's not to say th' energy is (in any way) low-end, 'coz this is some of th' finest jazz you'll hear today. My favorite cut on th' album was a Leighton original called "Carefree" (track 6). There is a feeling of "gentle" in the overall spirit of the tune that tracks totally with the title of the album, & will let you relax no matter how much tension you've brought home with you. The arrangements on "Deep Sea, by percussionist Allan Phillips, evoke images of sandy Caribbean beaches & lazy afternoons in th' sun. My favorite track (of all) on the CD, though, is another original by Bradley, "Easy Morning". The combination of subdued & laid-back B3 with Leighton's joyful expressions on his flute won't soon escape your ears, & will come back (days later) to recharge your mind. I suspect that if the B3 weren't there, this might be put in the "smooth jazz" bins (thus relegating it to NEVER-land for listeners like me), but it can NOT be placed in that (dreaded) pigeonhole, 'coz you can *hear* th' soul shining through! Some GREAT tunes & very tasty listening for years to come... this one is a KEEPER, without doubt. It gets a HIGHLY RECOMMENDED from us for dedicated jazz fans everywhere.

- Rotcod Zzaj, Improvijazzation Nation, March 2005

On *Just Doin' Our Thang*, flautist Bradley Leighton has several secret weapons that keep his disc both entertaining and still musically interesting enough to listen to many times. Whereas Zonjic relies on a heavy sonic background, the richness of Leighton's band comes from the fact that it is a classic Hammond B3 Organ trio. Organist Rob Whitlock, drummer Duncan Moore, and guitarist Bob Ross provide Leighton with a background over which he can send the beautiful, melodic, mellow tone of his alto flute. Yes, Leighton plays alto flute throughout this CD, making it a real rarity in the annals of recorded jazz.

Leighton and company open very nicely with a Latinesque version of the pop hit "Sunny" that provides a nice blueprint for what's to come—tightly knit arrangements that still allow room for the musicians to improvise and interact. The group is a little too laid back in their version of the bebop anthem "Now's the Time," and the tune surprisingly doesn't lend itself too well to the inclusion of organ. I wasn't too sure about the rock/funk beat imposed on Henry Mancini's "Pink Panther Theme," but after several listens, I think that it does work. Leighton, who makes the San Diego area his home these days, has a true West Coast jazz vibe about his playing that puts him in touch with the jazz flute tradition that includes Herbie Mann and Hubert Laws. Especially noteworthy is the group's rendition of Bobby Womack's "Breezin'," the tune that ushered in the smooth jazz era of George Benson's career. The tune doesn't stray too far from the original groove, but Leighton and his band manage to stretch the tune out more languorously allowing the listener to drain every possible drop of pleasure from it. Also excellent is the group's take on Carlos Santana's beautiful theme "Europa."

I'd recommend Bradley Leighton's *Just Doin' Our Thang* to anyone who enjoys cool jazz with a mellow groove, flute (or alto flute in particular) and Hammond B3 groups. Zonjic's disc can only be recommended to those who seriously enjoy contemporary smooth jazz and contemporary R&B. --- Jazztitude.com, April 2005

One of the rare combinations are presented here: flute and organ. We may be reminded of Herby Mann with his funky flute. Bradley however plays the alto flute which gives the sound a warmer tone.

Bradley has chosen a wonderful set of tunes like "Sunny", "Pink Panther" or "Summertime". The band swings along, funky and groovy. Rob Whitlock, a nobody in the jazz organ scene, plays a wonderful organ, fully integrated in the music of Bradley Leighton. This CD is worth listening to.

- International Archives of the Jazz Organ, March, 2005

JUST DOIN' OUR THANG is reminiscent of the late- night club groove you hear on the after-hour underground club scene when many of the musicians play their most happening sets! This CD has that Bradley Leighton's music including "Just Doin' Our Thang" is distributed exclusively by BIG DADDY MUSIC and is available at major music retailers including Tower, Amazon.com and CDBaby.com.

groove, that feeling that they “came to play” and it’s even more memorable because Bradley Leighton has put aside his main axe in favor of the alto flute. On this record, he represents a sound and style of the 70s, getting his Pacific Coast Jazz groove on and erasing any idea that the importance of the flute in jazz is dwindling. Accompanied by Rob Whitlock on Hammond B3 Organ, Duncan Moore on drums, Bob Boss on guitar and Allan Phillips on percussion and keyboards, Leighton kicks off the set with a cover of Bobby Hebb’s smash hit of the 70s titled “Sunny.” That whole 70’s Hammond B3 groove is all over this track and with Leighton’s alto flute taking over the melody lines, this song advances to another level. Henry Mancini’s “Pink Panther Theme” is carefree and humorous while “Summertime” gets a rich background that is warmed by new colors and bold melodic textures. This is a very entertaining set and that is mainly because of the fresh arrangements and the good feelings that exude from Leighton’s alto axe. Check it out. BUY JUST DOIN’ OUR THANG today.
-Paula Edelstein, soundsoftimelessjazz.com

Rancho Penasquitos flutist Bradley Leighton creates a rich, thick soup of funk jazz on his latest album, "Just Doin' Our Thang." It's a wholly pleasant sound that possesses the accessibility of George Benson, the straight-ahead chops of Les McCann or Weather Report, and the swirling rhythms of Tower of Power or War.

While this is Leighton's session, his name on the album, he is remarkably unpossessive of solo time, giving his co-horts as much room to stretch out as he saves for himself. In fact, some of the tracks sound more like it's Leighton in the supporting role.

In particular, he gives organist Rob Whitlock and guitarist Bob Boss every possible opportunity to solo.

The results are uniformly outstanding, and this unusual mixture of alto flute, organ and guitar gives the album a contemporary lounge sound ---- it's bright, hip and so very, very cool. Drummer Duncan Moore and percussionist Allan Phillips (who also wrote the arrangements) provide the uptempo beat that keeps pushing the music along.

The song selection is mostly covers of jazz classics, with a few originals thrown in. The covers range from Bobby Womack's "Breezin' " (owing much to Benson's version), Bill Withers' "Ain't No Sunshine" and the pop chestnut "Sunny," to sturdier material like the Gershwin standard "Summertime" and Charlie Parker's "Now's the Time." All are given fresh arrangements, and each manages to bring out new sides to what are, after all, very familiar songs.
- Jim Trageser, North County Times, April 14, 2005

Flautist **Bradley Leighton** recently launched his second CD for *Pacific Coast Jazz* in California. The new disc **Just Doin' Our Thang** is a lighthearted production clearly aimed at fans of smooth and contemporary styles.

Leighton recorded the entire session on the rich sounding alto-flute, laying aside his normal axe. The result is a blend of standards and originals that is very easy to like. It's the type of record you can play at a dinner party or BBQ (and I've done just that) with great success. It's the kind of music you'll hear if you drop in on one of the group's club gigs. The individual musicians play off each other nicely and never stray far from their target niche.

Texas born guitarist **Bob Boss** is impressive throughout the album and his solos are always tasteful and interesting. This writer is a fan of the Hammond B3 and found **Rob Whitlock's** participation a highlight of the session. Several tunes stand out including *Ain't No Sunshine*, *Europa* and *Sunny* but listen carefully to the originals by Bradley Leighton and percussionist Allan Phillips. Phillips' bossa piece, *Deep Sea* is particularly appealing and the leader's flute solo is a gem.

Bradley Leighton is a fine soloist and writer. On his own *Easy Morning and Carefree* he glides smoothly **Bradley Leighton's music including "Just Doin' Our Thang" is distributed exclusively by BIG DADDY MUSIC and is available at major music retailers including Tower, Amazon.com and CDBaby.com.**

and lightly. At other times he exhibits the gutsy growl that we once associated with Ian Anderson, Rashaan Roland Kirk and Jerome Richardson. This flautist is certainly a player to watch. Sound samples can be heard at the leader's website. ~Richard Bourcier, Jazzreview.com

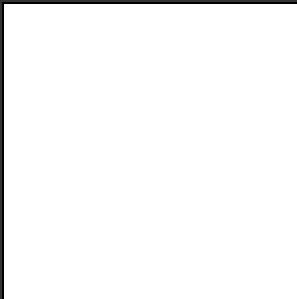
Just Doin' Our Thang brings me back to the late '60s and early '70s when jazz personalities like Ramsey Lewis, Herbie Mann, and Sergio Mendes were using contemporary pop material and selling records. Jazz music was losing momentum with the competition from the rock revolution and it was not unusual to hear any of the artists on Blue Note, Prestige, and other jazz labels playing Beatles tunes.

Flutist Bradley Leighton, from the Pacific Northwest, perhaps has the same idea in mind for his second album. I like the idea of combining his alto flute with an organ trio plus percussion, and the end product is a perfect summertime album. The twelve selections are not entirely pop music covers, but the vibe is upbeat and satisfying. Several of these tunes should be candidates for airplay on smooth jazz radio, including some of the Leighton originals.

35 years ago, everyone was required to sing or play Bobby Hebb's "Sunny," so it now seems like a good way to open this album. The flute provides a perfect counterpoint to the organ funk feel. Likewise, the ubiquitous "Breezin'," which George Benson parlayed into a pop jazz staple during the '80s, is again given a new life by Bob Boss, who delivers some good guitar licks. (Why am I fighting to say "Boss Guitar" here?) For the purists, Leighton and company dig into "Now's The Time," "Speak Low," and "Summertime." ~Michael P. Gladstone, All About Jazz

May 10, 2005

SONG OF THE WEEK: BRADLEY LEIGHTON – "EUROPA"



"Europa," the smooth jazz radio staple written by **Carlos Santana** and **Tom Coster** and also performed by saxophonist **Gato Barbieri**, gets a new twist from **Bradley Leighton**. Leighton performs the song on the alto flute, backed by the trio of **Rob Whitlock** on Hammond B3 organ, **Bob Boss** on guitar and **Duncan Moore** on drums.

It's dreamy.

Posted by Brian Soergel at May 10, 2005 08:26 PM

If ever there was an album that exemplified the Smoothjazz.com concept of "Where Smooth Jazz meets Cool Jazz," then this new release from flutist Bradley Leighton is it! JUST DOIN' OUR THANG is a first-rate collection of eight jazz and pop standards...plus four originals...that beautifully illustrates why the alto flute and the Hammond B3 just might be the most sensual combination of sound and texture in music. The concept of this album intrigued me right from the beginning. When I started listening, my expectations were easily exceeded. A Seattle native, transplanted down the Coast to San Diego in 2001, Mr. Leighton knows his way around jazz, having spent many years as Seattle's "first call" flutist. JUST DOIN' OUR THANG is his second CD release, and I can't begin to tell you how striking the B3 Trio setting is for his mellow, hip flute sound. From his incredibly sexy read (or should I say "reed") on the beautiful "Europa" to his spunky take on the "Pink Panther Theme"...from the sultry "Ain't No Sunshine" to the Bossa-flavored "Deep Sea" (penned by percussionist Allan Phillips), JUST DOIN' OUR THANG is full of inventive, inspired playing. This one's going to be spending a lot of time in my player this

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summer, and my recommendation is to get a copy for yourself. In the case of Bradley Leighton's JUST DOIN' OUR THANG, Smooth Jazz has met Cool Jazz...and there's definitely something going on between them!

~Scott O'Brien, Smoothjazz.com