

JAMES SILBERSTEIN GUITARIST AND COMPOSER



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James Silberstein's new CD is now available. The CD, which has received extensive US radio airplay, and reached #28 on the US Jazz Radio Chart listings, was released in July on the Consolidated Artists Production ("CAP") record label and is entitled "Song For Micaela" (James' daughter), and features Randy Brecker on trumpet, Eric Alexander on tenor sax, Carla Cook on one vocal, Bruce Barth on piano, Harvie S and Tony Cimorosi on bass and Vince Cherico on drums and percussion. Walter Wade (at WBGO) wrote the liner notes.

The CD cover and some comments about the CD are shown below.



"This CD represents the long overdue first album by one of New York City's best kept secrets. Jim Silberstein is a great player and a fine writer." Randy Johnston

"James Silberstein's warm tone and fluid single note burning style is reminiscent of Pat Martino and a younger George Benson, but he's clearly established a sound that's all his own with SONG FOR MICAELA." <http://www.soundsoftimelessjazz.com>

"James Silberstein is a wonderful guitar player." <http://www.jazzguitarlife.com>

"Song For Micaela is a mature effort, tasteful, skillful, and polished. . . . I'm already awaiting [Silberstein's] next foray, and if his fellow travelers are as well chosen, a pleasant journey it should be, indeed!" J. Robert Bragonier, All About Jazz

"One of the finest guitar-based, instrumental jazz albums of 2004." Robert Silverstein, 20th Century Guitar

“Silberstein's rapid-fire solo brings to mind Pat Martino's fiery intensity, but with a warm tone that is considerably lighter ... [his] flawless playing and mainstream predilection ties everything together into a neat package.” John Kelman, All About Jazz

James Silberstein “combines the warm tone and remarkable fluid single note burn of a Pat Martino, Tal Farlow or Joe Diorio with a capacity for harmonic sophistication, uncommon lyricism and a penchant for alluring bossa novas.” Gatsby Melodi, Afro American Syndicate, <http://www.afroamericansyndicate.com>

A fine outing from a significant talent! john.taylor@ca.ey.com

James entertains us for more than an hour with one winning selection after another. As a first CD, it has been a while in coming but well worth the wait. Frank Forte

James Silberstein has it all down pat on the guitar as made abundantly clear on a searing single note display on such winners as Nica's Dream and Love For Sale. All in all, this is an impressive performance. http://www.jsojazzscene.org/cd_reviews.php, September, 2004

With his recording debut, guitarist James Silberstein reveals a warm tone and crisp articulation. His straightahead session captures the essence of bebop, as he and his guests explore the art of improvisation over a theme. Several originals add favorably to the session's appeal. ~ [Jim Santella](#)

Silberstein sheds the extroverted cover on unaccompanied guitar in ballad *Why Did I Choose You* playing with rapt introspection and beauty in a closer that indelibly pulls off his first date without a hitch. It is an easy recommend. [Phillip Wong](#)

Silberstein is an imaginative soloist and his original compositions stand up quite nicely to the covers of "How Deep is the Ocean," "Love for Sale" and "Nica's Dream." <http://www.turbula.net/music/music-review-guitars.html>

All discourse aside this project has shelf life. Mr. Silberstein can hang his hat on this one and the jazz community awaits his next accomplishment. Song for Micaela never looks back nor should it! Karl Stober

James proves he is adept with both lead and rhythm guitar playing with a precision that places him among the top jazz guitarists. O's Place Jazz Newsletter, Summer 2004

See interview on <http://www.jazzguitarlife.com/index.htm>

The CD is available at Tower Records and other outlets and/or through the websites www.jamessilberstein.com and www.jazzbeat.com.

Song For Micaela
Artist: James Silberstein
CAP RECORDS

When I received the CD, Song for Micaela by James Silberstein, I realized that he had been on the New York jazz scene for quite a while and that this is his first CD (Consolidated Artists Productions, the record label run by Mike Longo, Dizzy Gillespie's longtime pianist and Lee Green). Micaela is James Silberstein's daughter and this tune is my favorite on this CD. It has a bossa beat, a catchy line and a great chordal treatment in the bridge. It is quiet, sultry, dark, but witty and intense and I might use all of those adjectives about James' playing in general. On this cut, he is accompanied by Tony Cimorosi and Vince Cherico and there is plenty of room for him to unwind great solos. In his solo on this as well as all of the songs in the CD, he is thoughtful and connected to the original line of the piece and connected well with his accompanist. This is quite a unique CD in that all of the groups that play on this CD seem to be playing as a group rather than a bunch of soloists. Each solo following the other seems to bring an expansion of the previous players' solo.

The opener of the CD is Red Carpet and James unrolls the red carpet for his listeners with great playing on a bittersweet head. This and his other originals are clever and melodic, memorable and well developed. Randy Brecker plays a beautiful trumpet solo and their interplay is notable.

Carla Cook, highlighted in So Many Stars, is backed by the captivating groove of bassist Harvie S and Vince Cherico on drums. The solo work by Silberstein is lyrical and compliments the vocal. I love his clear delivery of each motif, every note having its own place and own dynamic. Bruce Barth's piano solo rounds out this piece. Carla is so at home with this group that it would be interesting to hear a whole cd of them together. Her singing certainly adds to the value and enjoyment of this CD. On Nica's Dream, a Horace Silver icon, we get a very hard scrubbing. The guitar, trumpet, saxophone ensemble on the head is awakening. The word is driving. They become one. It is a window into the room full of energetic solos to come. Eric Alexander on tenor saxophone and Randy Brecker do this piece justice and note the lightening barrage of clear notes coming from the guitar to equal the statement of the trumpet and saxophone solos.

Baubles, Bangles and Beads was a jazz waltz neatly executed by the trio of James Silberstein, Tony Cimorosi and Vince Cherico. All the standards were played with just a little twist. His originals are mature examples of composition and quite engaging and the last piece on the CD, Why Did I Choose You, is a wonderful guitar solo. James entertains us for more than an hour with one winning selection after another. As a first CD, it has been a while in coming but well worth the wait.

Frank Forte md
8-02-04

August 12, 2004 - CD review: www.ejazznews.com

James Silberstein Song For Micaela Consolidated Artist Productions CAP 978

Reviewed By: John Taylor E-Mail: john.taylor@ca.ey.com

Jazz and blues are often considered two sides of the same coin. Yet while blues has always valued simplicity (current testosterone-fuelled trends notwithstanding), jazz tends to place greater emphasis on instrumental prowess. It's a broad generalization, admittedly, but one that holds up at least for the duration of James Silberstein's *Song For Micaela*.

New Yorker Silberstein has recruited a veritable who's who for his debut as leader. Among others, both Randy Brecker (trumpet) and Eric Alexander (sax) drop by for a handful; Bruce Barth is on keys, and Carla Cook tackles the disc's only vocal track, a sultry reading of Sergio Mendes' *So Many Stars*. Silberstein himself has been a working pro for some twenty-five years, so he knows a thing or two about allocating resources, and each song is given appropriate instrumental texture.

But while Silberstein's more than willing to step aside when required, this is clearly his show, and it's his fluid and fiery fretwork that dominates proceedings. That's not to say he's overly indulgent his solos, while dazzling, are brimming with musical ideas that keep things far more interesting than mere mechanics would. But even on tunes usually heard at slower tempos, he can't resist throwing in blazing runs that render much of his music more intellectual delight than an engaging emotional experience.

Silberstein is responsible for four of the compositions, including the gently swinging (and relatively calm) *Red Carpet* that kicks things off, the tricky *Aquas* with its unexpected changes, and the appropriately funky *House Party*. The title track, written for his daughter, has a bossa nova feel but is busier than one might expect; too many changes render the melody maddeningly elusive. Elsewhere there's a burning *Nica's Dream* (Horace Silver) and Cole Porter's *Love For Sale* taken at breathtaking speed. *How Deep Is The Ocean* also gets the bossa nova treatment to nice effect, Silberstein supported only by the rhythm section on what turns into a tour-de-force of fleet fretwork. *Who Can I Turn To* gives Alexander a chance to stretch out with some muscular sax work, while both *You're My Everything* and *Bubbles, Bangles And Beads* are trio explorations with Silberstein teasing familiar melodies into surprising shapes. Things close with a short solo rendition of *Why Did I Choose You*. Despite the song being just over two minutes long, though, even here Silberstein manages to throw in a surprise or two.

While the overall tone is warm and relaxing, *Song For Micaela* is much too challenging to be lumped into the *Easy jazz* category. But while it may require a bit more work, it's infinitely more rewarding than much of the pabulum that passes for jazz these days.

A fine outing from a significant talent!

July 19, 2004

SONG FOR MICAELA

James Silberstein

There is nothing like the exotic intriguing sound of a great voice blended with the passionate sounds of great accompanists. This is what you'll hear as you listen to such great artists as James Silberstein, Carla Cook, Randy Brecker, Eric Alexander, Bruce Barth and Harvie S, among others on SONG FOR MICAELA. James Silberstein, an amazing guitarist who has been slightly under the music scene's radar for the past 25 years, presents his debut for Consolidated Artists Productions and it's a keeper. His warm tone and fluid single note burning style is reminiscent of Pat Martino and a younger George Benson, but he's clearly established a sound that's all his own with SONG FOR MICAELA. The great soloing from Randy Brecker on "Red Carpet," as well as "Nica's Dream," "Aguas" and "House Party," make this program exciting and is an invitation to keep listening. Carla Cook sings "So Many Stars" with imaginative phrasings and nuance. Her four-octave voice is heard as a soprano this time around on the timeless Brazilian jazz standard. "Nica's Dream" is the perfect vehicle for Silberstein's nimble articulate playing as well as his uptempo reading of "Love For Sale." This is an excellent recording and one that any jazz guitar enthusiast will enjoy having in their collection. Swinging with style and definitely in-the-pocket. Buy SONG FOR MICAELA today at <http://www.jazzbeat.com>

<http://www.soundsoftimelessjazz.com/pages/618619/index.htm>

Paula Edelstein
Manager of Content Development
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Contributor

All Music
All About Jazz
Jazz USA
Jazz It

July 21, 2004

CD review AllAboutJazz.com: Song For Micaela

It takes some folks a little longer than others to develop the confidence to record an album as leader; still others never decide to do it at all. James Silberstein falls in the former group. He's been a working pro on the Georgia, Miami, and New York jazz scenes for nearly 25 years, but he's spent most of that time "flying just under the radar," at least until now.

With "Song for Micaela", Silberstein has abandoned his stealth posture and emerged into radar range, both as guitarist and composer. The album is a mature effort, tasteful, skillful, and polished. Stellar sidemen assist in bringing these selections, four of which are originals, to life, with verve and vitality. The CD opens with the first original, for quartet; Randy Brecker kicks off the first solo in this mid-tempo minor-key swinger with aplomb. Silberstein comps well, and his solo revels in quick, sure runs and full, round tone. The album's only vocal follows: Sergio Mendes' lovely "So Many Stars," with Carla Cook caressing the Bergmans' wistful English lyrics; very nice stuff, with an engaging dialogue between guitar and piano solos. "Nica's Dream" cooks, with fleet solos for guitar, sax, trumpet, and then guitar again. Nearly six minutes give them time to stretch out, while the rhythm section provides a most dependable engine beneath; Harvie S's bass gently jogs, and Cherico's touch is light and delicate.

From quintet, the band expands to sextet for two originals: "Agua" is a bluesy, 32-bar, minor amble a bit reminiscent of Bobby Timmons' tunes. Voicings in passages are lush and complex, and solos are satisfying. "House Party" is energetic and funky; solos all around sizzle, although to my ear, the Fender Rhodes electric piano has a dated, retro sound. Two standards in trio format follow: Cole Porter's "Love for Sale" (ever think it should've been entitled "Love for Rent?") is taken at a break-neck pace (Silberstein's solo is his nimblest performance yet), while Berlin's "How Deep Is the Ocean" is done as a bossa/samba. On an up-tempo "Who Can I Turn To" (I hear my old grammar teacher prompting, "To Whom Can I Turn!"), Alexander's tenor dazzles, followed by Silberstein's superlative single-note solo, reflecting his admiration for such forbearers as Bucky Pizzarelli, Mundell Lowe, and Chuck Wayne, with whom he has studied. Trio versions of "Song for Micaela," a bossa nova written for Silberstein's daughter; a medium-tempo "You're My Everything"; and the jazz waltz "Baubles, Bangles & Beads" bring us to the CD's satisfying conclusion, a brief solo rendition of "Why Did I Choose You."

Now that James Silberstein has been spotted, there's no reason for him to return to the shadows. I'm already awaiting his next foray, and if his fellow travelers are as well chosen, a pleasant journey it should be, indeed!

www.jazzbeat.com/

J. Robert Bragonier, All About Jazz

<http://a248.e.akamai.net/f/248/5462/2h/jazzbeat.safeshopper.com/images/70o2v1k.jpg>

Song For Micaela

By John Kelman

By all accounts guitarist James Silberstein has been a busy working musician on the Georgia, Miami and New York scenes for twenty-five years, but has operated mainly beneath the radar, only now releasing his debut CD, *Song For Micaela*, which finds him mining the juncture between post bop modernists like Pat Martino and more staid traditionalists like Tal Farlow. With a programme that combines some well-heeled standards with a number of interesting originals whose main purpose is to create an open space for the group to improvise, Silberstein has put together a comfortable and engaging session that may not break any rules but occasionally bends them.

"How Deep Is The Ocean," for example, is treated as a light bossa, with Silberstein developing the theme through a combination of linear and chordal playing. "Love For Sale" is taken at a fast clip, with Silberstein's rapid-fire solo bringing to mind Pat Martino's fiery intensity, but with a warm tone that is considerably lighter. "Nica's Dream", another burner, finds guest saxophonist Eric Alexander winding his way through the changes with an energy that is only surpassed when trumpeter Randy Brecker takes centre stage.

With the only constant, other than Silberstein, being drummer Vince Cherico, the recording runs the risk of sounding too much like a session, but Silberstein's flawless playing and mainstream predilection ties everything together into a neat package that maintains focus even as the players shift. Bassist Harvie S works hand-in-glove with Cherico on "House Party", a funky blues with an elliptical theme that could easily be in the Martino songbook, while co-producer/bassist Tony Cimorosi works similar simpatico interplay on Silberstein's title track, a light bossa that features Silberstein in an especially lyrical mood, although he's clearly not averse to tearing things up a bit at the same time.

The inclusion of a vocal track featuring Carla Cook, the Sergio Mendes tune "So Many Stars," feels a bit like the odd man out; still, it comes early on and doesn't detract from the considerable momentum Silberstein builds during the rest of the set. With feet planted firmly in the tradition, Silberstein is a confident player whose craft is finely honed, no more in evidence than on "Why Did I Choose You," a solo guitar piece that Silberstein contributes as a winding-down coda to the generally upbeat session. *Song For Micaela* introduces Silberstein, a well-kept secret, to a larger audience and bodes well for more to come.

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Featured Artist: James Silberstein
Jazzreview.com, July 2004

CD Title: Song For Micaela

Year: 2004

Record Label: CAP

Style: BeBop / Hard Bop

Review: This CD project is a festive gathering of jazz giants re-inventing their 'covers' with an imaginative bent for fine musicianship & improvisational skill. Silberstein knows who to hire as well, creating a disc that massages your musical sensibilities with artistic energy, musical color, ideas, etc., (with Bruce Barth, Randy Breker, Harvie S. et al.) The combined group proffers a 'distinctive sound' for our instruction, as well as a presence that guarantees a professionalism equipped to inspire.

Reviewed by: George W. Carroll / The Musicians' Ombudsman
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JAMES SILBERSTEIN - BIOGRAPHY



Although he has been a working pro on the New York scene for the past 25 years, guitarist James Silberstein had been flying somewhat under the radar . . . until now. An accomplished player who combines the warm tone and remarkably fluid single note burn of a Pat Martino, Tal Farlow or Joe Diorio with a capacity for harmonic sophistication, uncommon lyricism and a penchant for alluring bossa novas, Silberstein crafts an invigorating and appealing collection of standards and originals on *Song for Micaela*, his long overdue debut as a leader. Along for the ride are the guitarist's core working rhythm section of bassist/producer Tony Cimososi and drummer Vince Cherico as well as such stellar guests as trumpeter Randy Brecker, saxophonist Eric Alexander, pianist Bruce Barth, bassist Harvie S and vocalist Carla Cook. Together these seasoned jazz artists swing with authority while engaging in some fiery interplay along the way.

Silberstein and crew open the collection in easy mid-tempo mode on James' original, "Red Carpet." Cimososi's steady walking bass lines and Cherico's light, interactive touch provide a solidly swinging foundation for potent solos by both Brecker and Silberstein on this jaunty quartet number. Carla Cook then unveils her hauntingly beautiful delivery on a poignant reading of the gorgeous Sergio Mendes ballad "So Many Stars," which also features nimble, engaging solos from guitar and piano. Silberstein burns a blue streak on Horace Silver's "Nica's Dream," a spirited post-bop romp that also features Brecker and Alexander on the frontline and is fueled by the surging rhythm tandem of bassist Harvie S and drummer Cherico. The easy grooving blues "Aguas" is Silberstein's answer to Horace Silver-Bobby Timmons soul-jazz anthems like "Juicy Lucy" and "Dat Dere," while "House Party" is a funk-fueled throw-down with the full ensemble featuring some sizzling solo contributions from Brecker, Silberstein, Alexander and Barth on Fender Rhodes electric piano.

On a burning up-tempo trio rendition of Cole Porter's "Love For Sale," Silberstein

pulls out all the stops and unleashes one of his most impressive, fleet-fingered solos on the collection. His combination of impeccable articulation, fluent lines and sheer blazing speed here is yet more evidence of the guitarist's infinite capacity to burn. Elsewhere, he renders Irving Berlin's "How Deep Is The Ocean" as an alluring bossa-samba in a pared down trio setting, then brings back Alexander for a buoyant, up-tempo take on Anthony Newley's signature piece, "Who Can I Turn To," which serves as a perfect vehicle to showcase the young tenor titan's ability to blow through the changes with relentless drive and a robust, deep tone. Silberstein adds another flawlessly facile single note solo here that is firmly in the swinging tradition of jazz guitar elders like Chuck Wayne, Bucky Pizzarelli and Mundell Lowe.

Silberstein strikes an evocative note on "Song for Micaela," an appealing bossa nova original written for his daughter, and he engages in some loose-hip interplay with bassist Harvie S and drummer Cherico on an easy-swinging trio rendition of the oft-recorded jazz standard "You're My Everything." Harvie offers up a lyrical solo here while James and Vince exchange some tight "fours" that reveal their obvious chemistry together. Sticking with the trio format, Silberstein, Cimososi and Cherico turn in an affecting jazz waltz rendition of "Baubles, Bangles & Beads," which features a particularly fiery solo from the guitarist. And the collection closes on a beautifully introspective note with James' virtuosic unaccompanied take on the affecting Mickey Leonard composition, "Why Did I Choose You," which stands as a veritable clinic in the art of solo guitar. As he explained, "I've done a lot of solo guitar gigs over the years, so having at least one solo piece on the CD seemed to be a good way of demonstrating a different aspect of my playing. I love playing solo. It's really challenging to try to come up with counterpoint lines and appealing harmonies in developing arrangements of standard tunes."

Born in New York City, Silberstein grew up in White Plains before his family moved back to the big City when he was 16. Two years later, he met the Brazilian guitarist Gaudencio Thiago de Mello, who would become an important mentor for the developing guitarist. While soaking up the sounds of Brazilian music from de Mello and from the recordings of other Brazilian guitarists like Baden Powell and Bola Sete, James also began immersing himself in jazz guitar by checking out key recordings and hanging out at New York clubs like The Guitar, formerly located on 50th Street and 10th Avenue. As he recalled, "I started going to The Guitar and other clubs when I was in my 20s and regularly saw great players like Kenny Burrell, Jim Hall, Chuck Wayne, Joe Puma, George Barnes and Bucky Pizzarelli. One of my very favorites was Sam Brown, who had played with Bill Evans and also appeared on records with Keith Jarrett and Chick Corea. He was such a melodic, deep player. He played great chords, had an infinite repertoire and was a beautiful person. I ended up playing a lot of duo gigs with Sam and fortuitously had the opportunity to learn from him at the same time we were gigging."

Silberstein studied briefly with Chuck Wayne and also played with Bucky Pizzarelli. Another important mentor for James during this period was Tim Breen, a journeyman who played with Frankie Valli & the Four Seasons, among others. "He's one of the greatest guitarists I've heard. Unfortunately, he died earlier this year without ever

receiving the due he so deserved -- what a genius . . . an incredible player." Silberstein's other credits during his developing years include gigs with such a diverse list of artists as Larry Elgart's Big Band, The Drifters and Zoot Sims as well as backing comedian Bob Hope. In the early '80s, he spent some time playing at a resort hotel in Georgia, then relocated to Miami, where he befriended fellow jazz guitarist Randy Johnston. Since returning to New York City in the '80s, he's played with a whole host of musicians on the jazz scene including, among others, saxophonists Dave Schnitter and Carter Jefferson and guitarists Peter Leitch and Attila Zoller and an up-and-coming young vocalist by the name of Norah Jones. James has also been quite active on the private party circuit, which is where he met bassist Tony Cimorosi several few years ago. "Tony's been a truly motivating force for me," says James. "He persuaded me to do this CD, and helped greatly with the overall concept and involving some of the other players. Tony had played with Vince Cherico and introduced me to him. I really love Vince's playing. He's the perfect drummer for my style of playing. He's so intense, but quiet. He knows how to build dynamics without being overpowering and he's really tuned into the soloist's phrasing."

Together this core trio swings with authority on *Song for Micaela*. Adding world-class players like Randy Brecker, Eric Alexander, Bruce Barth and Harvie S to the mix only ups the ante on Silberstein's auspicious debut that has been such a long time in coming. "Some people are slow to move forward," the guitarist confesses. "Sometimes you really need someone pushing you to be able to progress and develop confidence. So I'm really thankful to Tony for his supportive pushing and to my wife Sarah for her always-on-target insights into what needed work and endless patience in answering questions like: 'which sounds better here?' I'm very glad to have done the CD. Being in the studio has been a terrific learning experience -- really focusing on playing precisely and thinking ahead, but also playing with passion and abandon."

And hopefully, there will be more to come from this prodigious guitar talent deserving of wider recognition.

Bill Milkowski