



**Universal Truth**  
Emmet Cohen (Mack Avenue)  
by Jeff Cebulski

Jazz ambassador Emmet Cohen's pianistic *joie de vivre* and his infectious, creative muse uncannily transport vitality into whomever he plays with, as demonstrated by his award-winning, home woodshedding *Emmet's Place* livestream. Cohen's democratic philosophy is prominent on the new album *Universal Truth*, his contribution to the centennial celebrations of Miles Davis and John Coltrane. While sticking to his post-bop predilections, the pianist gathered an adroit ensemble and celebrates his respect for, and inspiration from, the two revered giants, involving two important icons from Davis' career while receiving inspiration for new music from the spirit of Coltrane.

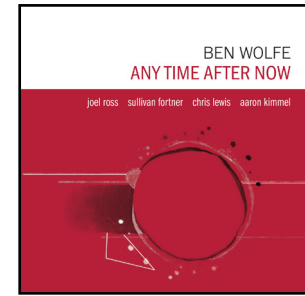
Of the album's eight selections, five are energized and tethered by the swinging duo of Yasushi Nakamura (bass) and Joe Farnsworth (drums). Farnsworth, who always seems to be in motion, is a solid choice for the bop-peripatetic Cohen, whose post-Ellington keyboard energy keeps the energy high. On three middle selections, as a tribute to Davis, Nakamura is replaced by the eminent Miles alum Ron Carter, who never fails to serve as a

fulcrum for great music. On "My Funny Valentine", Carter reunites with eloquent elder tenor saxophonist George Coleman, as the pair revisit Davis' version from the classic live album *My Funny Valentine: Miles Davis in Concert* (Columbia, 1964), on which they both appeared. Coleman here is no less eloquent; Carter's solid center is demonstrated nobly on "Well You Needn't" and "Gingerbread Boy", while supporting trumpeter Jeremy Pelt's playing exudes a welcome brightness and verve, his arpeggios and striking tone lifting the tunes considerably.

A second tenor saxophonist, Tivon Pennicott, provides a partner for Pelt during Cohen's three-part suite, "I. Eternal Glimpse, II. Compassion, III. Universal Truth", which is the pianist's testimony to Coltrane's influence and a personal philosophy statement. "Eternal Glimpse" moves on a shimmering Cohen intro to a pleasant two-horn refrain advanced atop a mild calypso groove, exuding good vibes. "Compassion", the least-energized album piece, is anointed by Pelt's exquisite, Davis-coned statement. The final movement/section (and album title) of the suite finishes the testimony with a solemn opening refrain that leads to a powerful ensemble convergence where Nakamura and Farnsworth provide a deep pocket for an expansive Cohen expression and a stirring Pelt solo. The group gathers one last time for the classic "Blue Train", performed mostly on the nose but in more of a celebratory spirit.

On *Universal Truth*, Emmet Cohen again showcases his ability to convene fellow artists in his comfort zone where swing dominates and respect reigns.

For more info visit [mackavenue.com](http://mackavenue.com). Cohen is at *Smoke* Jul. 8-12 and *Caramoor Jazz Festival* (Katonah, NY) Jul. 25. See *Calendar* and *100 Miles Out*.



**Any Time After Now**  
Ben Wolfe (Resident Arts)  
by Thomas Conrad

For his twelfth recording as a leader, bassist Ben Wolfe assembled a new quintet and brought in two players who are rapidly becoming famous. Sullivan Fortner and Joel Ross are, according to the 2025 *DownBeat* Critics Poll, the #3 pianist and #2 vibraphonist in jazz. Wolfe's other two choices were tenor saxophonist Chris Lewis and drummer Aaron Kimmel. The leader booked this band for three nights at Dizzy's Club, then took them into a studio (Power Station at BerkleeNYC) and recorded this album in one day. Jeff "Tain" Watts wrote the liner notes, which reports, "It feels like one of those days where everything works." It is true. *Any Time After Now* has a natural, poised, self-possessed, even elegant quality. Wolfe has said, "It is about the ensemble sound." That is also true. Fortner and Ross are both special improvisers. But here they are so intuitively complementary that you almost forget which one is soloing.

"If Only" is a typical track: each intertwines their personal versions of Wolfe's alluring melody, gliding in and out of one another's thoughts. Fortner has achieved his current stature not through ostentation

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of Music



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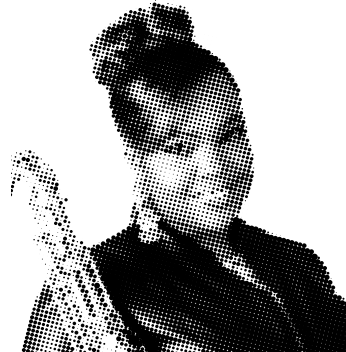
July 9  
April Varner



July 16  
Tyler Bassett



July 23  
Benny Benack III



July 30  
Camille Thurman



August 6  
Eitan Kenner



August 13  
June Cavlan



August 20  
Wayne Tucker



August 27  
Leonieke Scheuble