

Steve Raybine
Bad Kat Karma

Reviewed by Brian Soergel



Everybody talks about good vibes, but Steve Raybine actually plays them. When the thought of yet another sax, guitar or piano CD kind of grinds on you, spinning Raybine's tunes can do wonders for your musical mood. The track that stands out on **Bad Kat Karma** (that cool cat on the cover could be the friendlier brother of the Rippingtons' Jazz Cat) is George Benson's iconic *Breezin*, produced and featuring keyboards by Raybine's college chum and smooth jazz superstar Rick Braun. Also charming is a thoroughly soulful take on *Sunny*, its breezy melody riding happily along with Rashad McPherson's vocals.

The CD's eight remaining selections are strong tunes with plenty of vibe solos, but they also allow other musicians to stretch on sax, trumpet and piano solos, bringing plenty of diversity to the project. *Cha Cha Cool* and *Bop City*, for example have plenty of brassy interludes but also an inspired piano solo by Jim Mertz on the former and an appropriately be-boppish sax run by Nelson Rangell on the latter. And Braun returns with beautiful muted trumpet playing on the balled *Indigo Night*, which is really a duet with saxophonist Chad Stoner. Stoner comes back on another ballad, *Breckenridge Blue*, this time dueting with Raybine.

Raybine is an accomplished jazz educator and has published numerous papers about his instrument and craft, but sometimes you just have to show instead of tell. Raybine's showing just fine with **Bad Kat Karma**.