

***Bad Kat Karma* review by Elaine Miller**

Steve Raybine, known affectionately as the "Master of the Mallets", is a unique musician in today's genre of contemporary jazz. This very talented and accomplished vibraphonist, percussionist, composer, arranger, author, instructor and clinician is extraordinarily unlike any other in the industry. Steve's musical philosophy is only the beginning of what sets him apart from other musicians, believing that "Freedom of expression and everyone's musical journey is an ongoing process uniquely their own." And unique is exactly what vibraphonist extraordinaire, Steve Raybine, is.

Many Jazz aficionados may remember Steve as the co-founder (with college friend and fellow c-jazz artist Rick Braun) of the jazz group Auracle. As a part of Auracle, Steve recorded 2 albums as well as toured the U.S. and Europe. Steve has also played at the acclaimed Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland and is a repeat performer at the Breckenridge Genuine Jazz Festival in Colorado.

Bad Kat Karma, recorded on his own record label BAD KAT Records, is the second solo CD for this very inspirational artist. *Bad Kat Karma* is original contemporary jazz with 8 of the 10 tunes being written by Raybine. The two cover tunes are so unlike the originals that one almost assumes that they are Raybine's as well. *Bad Kat Karma* contains musical elements of jazz, R & B, Latin, pop and light funk. The album overall has a nice underlying groove with very intoxicating, hypnotic and catching melodies.

The feel of *Bad Kat Karma* is very enjoyable. You can listen to this disc in a traffic jam, you can listen to this disc while enjoying the company of friends, or you can listen to this disc while experiencing a romantic evening. *Bad Kat Karma* really has no boundaries when it comes to listening pleasure or preference. And one really never tires of listening to *Bad Kat Karma*.

On *Bad Kat Karma*, Steve has some very notable guest appearances. Rick Braun is found on keyboards, trumpet and programming, Randy Jacobs on guitar, Steve Kujala on flute, Rashad McPherson on vocals, and Nelson Rangell on alto saxophone. Chad Stoner is featured throughout the album on alto and tenor saxophones, and it must be noted that Steve's son, David, also appears on *Bad Kat Karma*.

The vibes just quite simply speak for themselves, and on that note, nothing else needs to be said.

For a glimpse of what *Bad Kat Karma* is about:

1. *Bad Kat Karma*--Features Chad Stoner on tenor sax and Steve's son David playing background harmonies on alto sax---This is the funky cut on the CD with a nice rhythm section incorporated into and throughout the tune.
2. *Breezin'*--Has a relaxed island-like version of the classic George Benson cover written by Bobby Womack. Arranged by Rick Braun, it features Braun on keyboards and programming, Randy Jacobs on guitar and Steve Kujala on flute--This cut could easily become a big radio hit for Steve.
3. *Cha Cha Cool*--Has a "Chill" feel to it with a nice groove and impressive horn section to compliment the vibes...so cool, you want to put on your Bad Kat shades and groove.
4. *Bop City*--Features virtuoso sax man Nelson Rangell on alto sax, handling the alto sax piece as only Rangell can. This tune has a bit more straight ahead jazz feel that is very upbeat.
5. *Indigo Night*--Is dedicated to wife, Beth. It features Rick Braun on muted trumpet and has a very soft smooth jazzy radio feel. It leaves you longing for nights of quiet romance.
6. *Sunny*--Makes you feel sunny inside and is a very danceable groove, This very expressive song features Rashad McPherson who adds the perfect touch on vocals. There is also a beautiful tenor sax piece/solo by Stoner, as well as piano piece by Dan Cerveny.
7. *Breckenridge Blue*--Is a beautiful and somewhat romantic song inspired from "2003 Breckenridge Genuine Jazz Festival". It takes you back to the beautiful mountain air listening to jazz spread out on a blanket at the base of slopes and just taking it and all the beauty in.
8. *Querido David*--Is Dedicated to son David. This very Latin-esque song has a nice tenor sax piece.
9. *Second Chance*--A mellow, reflective tune with the vibes just asking or begging you to reflect on past and future...possibly giving you, someone or something a second chance
10. *Song for Sam*--Is dedicated to Steve's son Sam. The vibes are very subtle in this calmingly relaxing, quiet tune that gives you a warm feeling.

So go get and put on your shades, and get your 'Cha Cha Cool' going, in the 'Breezin' 'Sunny' 'Breckenridge Blue' before the 'Indigo Night' in the 'Bop City' and show everyone exactly what 'Bad Kat Karma' is.

Or simply, just put in a copy of *Bad Kat Karma* and experience and hear for yourself what the "Master of the Mallets" Steve Raybine has to say.

Either way, I promise you, you will not be disappointed.

-Elaine Miller

Elaine Miller is a freelance writer and contributor to Smoothnotesandnews.com, and lives in Aurora, CO.