

Evan Christopher - Clarinet Road Vol. 2: Road To Romance (2000)

Written by bluesever

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1. *If I Should Lose You* (5:28) 2. *Sweet And Slow* (7:51) 3. *Love Walked In* (5:23) 4. *I'm Glad There Is You* (5:20) 5. *It Had To Be You* (4:20) 6. *One Night Of Love* (4:25) 7. *East Of The Sun* (4:15) 8. *The Peacocks* (7:18) 9. *I'm In The Mood For Love* (6:21) 10. *It's You Or No One* (4:57)

Evan Christopher - clarinet Jack Sheldon - trumpet & vocal (2,6,9) Tierney Sutton - vocal 4,7,9 Chris Dawson - piano Derek Oles - bass Larence Marable - drums (3) Kendall Kay – drums

“Contemporary early jazz,” the phrase New Orleans clarinetist Evan Christopher uses to describe his music, sounds every bit like an oxymoron until you hear him at work. His buoyant, plush tone and slinky hothouse phrasing reveals stylistic links to some of the Crescent City’s first and best licorice stick masters—folks like Sidney Bechet, Barney Bigard, and Omar Simeon—but he’s no moldy fig revivalist. The California native first moved to New Orleans in 1994 and quickly made himself at home. He worked with Al Hirt, recorded with veteran members of Preservation Hall Jazz Band, and played with adventurous funkateers Galactic and various brass bands, but he really became an ambassador for the city’s music in the last decade, including extensive travel to Paris, France in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, where he began making deep connections to the jazz Manouche of Django Reinhardt. In his duet project with pianist Tom McDermott he flows seamlessly between Argentine tango, Brazilian choro, and Gypsy jazz, yet together they leave no doubt that all of their inspiration springs from the Big Easy.

Still, Christopher’s foundation is jazz of the 20s—including the early sounds of Chicago—whether he’s playing originals or revisiting the classic repertoire. On his fantastic quartet album *The Remembering Song* (Arbors) his melodic generosity ignores strict temporal boundaries, sprawling luxuriously over the warm guitar chords of Bucky Pizzarelli and the firm but unobtrusive bass tones of one-time John Zorn cohort Greg Cohen. Christopher’s primary vehicle of expression is his Clarinet Road project, which he presents today in his Chicago Jazz Festival debut; that band deftly transcends genre while staying anchored in the language of

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New Orleans clarinet. This incarnation of the long-running project includes guitarist and bassist Don Vappie, organist and pianist Joe Ashlar, and drummer Ocie Davis. --- jazzinchicago.org

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