

Alexander Berenson – Take Me With You (2009)

Written by bluesever

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1 *For My Mother* 2 *I Said It Before* 3 *Take Me With You* 4 *Again For Old* 5 *Mr. IB*
6 *Voice* 7 *Osto* 8 *Waltz # 14* 9 *Blues For Eugene K.* Bass – Essiet Essiet Drums –
Donald Edwards Piano – Cyrus Chestnut (tracks: 1,2,3,7), Eugene Maslov (tracks: 4,5,6,8)
Saxophone – Igor Butman Trumpet – Alexander Berenson

«For many years it was an established opinion that the best jazz exists only in America. This is now becoming obsolete. Sure, there are many great cats that live and blow in the USA, but not exclusively. The new album of Russian trumpeter Alexander Berenson serves as vivid evidence to this statement. The 45-year old Peterburgian acts here as bandleader, performer and composer. This is his debut actually, and makes one feel joy and regret at the same time: joy because it finally happened quite successfully, and regret because the artist demonstrates such a maturity and blossoming of creativity, that it suggests his debut could have taken place a bit earlier. Well, better late than never» (NY jazz critic Dr Tough on «Take Me With You»).

Trumpet player Alexander Berenson was already a highly respected personality in Russian jazz (then underground) music in early 80s. After graduating from Mussorgsky's College of Music, he plunged into semi-forbidden but amazing jazz life of St Petersburg. Along with supersaxophonist Igor Butman he created a jazz combo, which became one of the hottest groups around in the mid 80s. Alexander and Igor combined leading their band with playing in the world's oldest jazz orchestra – Oleg Lundstrem's Orchestra. Friends also didn't limit themselves to jazz: they toured with Russian avant-garde project «Pop-mekhanika» and top Russian rock band «Aquarium». Alex's collaboration with Butman lasted till 1984 when Igor moved to Moscow and 3 years after – to New York, their partnership was fated to continue only in 2000s.

In 90s Alexander played with the best local jazz acts, headlined Russian and international festivals, lived and performed in Italy and Germany. Since 1990 Alexander have been a

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professor at his alma mater, Mussorgsky's College of Music.

In 2004 Alexander recorded his critically acclaimed album called «Life as purely creative process» featuring top notch Russian jazz musicians – from Igor Butman to Andrew Kondakov. In 2010 Butman Music Records released Berenson's second album «Take me with You» with a really fantastic line up! The album was recorded in NY's Avatar studios with saxophonist Igor Butman, pianist Cyrus Chestnut (Manhattan Trinity), bass player Essiet Essiet (ex-Jazz Messengers) and drummer Donald Edwards (Mingus Big Band). What's even more fascinating is that renowned US and Russian jazzmen don't play standards from Great American Songbook, they play original, unusual and groundbreaking pieces written by Alexander himself (except one by Oliver Gannon)!

Trumpeter's international breakthru is perfectly described by NY-based jazz critic Dr Tough: «Berenson's composing and performing style doesn't leave any doubts that his knowledge of a so called "tradition" or "heritage" is deep and wide. His music manifests a post-bop modernism at its best – he is far from blind copying well-known cliches, but rather looking for his own path through that well-stomped field. As a trumpeter, Mr. Berenson is on his way to developing the achievements of such greats as Freddie Hubbard and Woody Shaw, and he is doing it at a high level. The ghost of Miles is here too - in the quality of sound and phrasing. The artist lets us know directly that he is in charge of his business and knows exactly what he wants and where he is going. All that gives one a happy confidence that the art of jazz doesn't give up and still lives in the works of a new generation. The same confidence is supported by Berenson's compositions – sophisticated, dramatically tensioned, sometimes soft and relaxed, but never meaningless, and always well done melodically and harmonically. Berenson follows the highest samples, and even the names of his pieces reflect his desire to be among "tradition" – such as "Again for Old" or "I Said it Before" turn our memory to the "golden time" of jazz, to the music of Wayne Shorter and Herbie Hancock. I trust jazz fans and experts will value it.» --- ibmg.ru

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