



[Overview](#) [Review](#) [Credits](#) [Charts & Awards](#) [Buy](#)

Balloons: Live At The Blue Note

Kenny Werner



Review

by Thom Jurek

As a composer, pianist **Kenny Werner's** reach is vast: it encompasses not only the jazz heritage, but also the classical and folk traditions, Western and Eastern. **Balloons** is compiled from two nights of quintet performances at the Blue Note in April of 2010 with trumpeter **Randy Brecker**, saxophonist **David Sanchez**, bassist **John Patitucci**, and drummer **Antonio Sanchez**. These four long pieces reveal new traits in **Werner's** compositional thinking and present complex, harmonic notions accessibly. Simultaneously, this group makes the most of improvisational opportunities presented by their combined dynamic and tonal possibilities. "Sada" opens with a lilting, graceful melody, articulated by long, languid tones from **Brecker** and **David Sanchez**. **Werner** plays a series of comped notes as a constant, restrained drone is underscored by bass and drums. Even in his fine solo, he stays within a limited palette, both highlighting the melody and creating sense of space and color that is further enhanced by **David Sanchez's** solo later on. "Siene" showcases the entire frontline on a bossa-tinged groove. **Brecker** is illustrative and bright; **David Sanchez** more forceful and edgy; **Werner** holds them together assertively as he comps, then, inspired by their playing, finds a stellar bop improvisation in his solo. The title track is a seeming child's lullaby in the singsongy melody that is articulated in a long, hypnotic piano solo intro atop a pulsing, hypnotic, two-chord pattern. When the band enters, they add air and light, opening the tune up without sacrificing its childlike notion of song. The melody expands as **Brecker** and **David Sanchez** play rounded warm expressions of it before their solos come into play. The album's final track, "Class Dismissed," is ebullient from the start with **Antonio Sanchez's** drums playing in an aggressive stop-start time as piano, trumpet, and saxophone dig deeply into a very knotty, hard-swinging lyric. **Patitucci's** fluidity and force bridge the players, even when the horns enter into contrapuntal discussions. **Werner's** piano frames that energy and makes it sing. The drum solo is an exercise in Afro-Cuban, post-bop lyricism in and of itself. **Balloons** is, at its heart, yet another expression of **Werner's** compositional, instrumental, and leadership gifts; but it is also a document of a group communicating so intuitively, that it sounds like they've been together for decades.



Album Browser

< Previous Next >

Artist

Kenny Werner

Album

Balloons: Live At The Blue Note

Rating

★★★★☆

Release Date

Mar 15, 2011

Recording Date

Apr 17, 2010 - Apr 18, 2010

Label

Half Note Records

Type

Live

Time

53:41

Genre

Jazz

Style

Post-Bop
Avant-Garde Jazz
Modal Music
Modern Creative
Jazz Instrument
Piano Jazz

Moods

Ambitious
Lush
Uncompromising
Cerebral
Complex
Knotty
Bittersweet
Dramatic
Eccentric
Hypnotic
Intimate
Joyous
Literate
Passionate
Playful
Poignant

Themes

Introspection
Reflection
The Creative Side
Maverick

Tracks

	Title	Composer	Time
1	Sada	Werner	12:21
2	Siena	Werner	11:48
3	Balloons	Werner	17:47
4	Class Dismissed	Werner	11:45

👂 indicates Track Pick
🔍 indicates a click-through to a song review

Reflective
Romantic
Sophisticated
Spiritual

AMG Album ID

R 2128505

[Corrections to this Entry?](#)

[Our Authors](#) | [About Us](#) | [Contact](#) | [Employment](#) | [Product Submissions](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Service](#) | [Copyright Policy](#)
© 2011 Rovi Corporation. All Rights Reserved.

