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Artist :: Calvin Keys
Album :: [An Evening With....](#)
Year :: 1994
Label :: LifeForceJazz
Review by :: [Brian Harvey](#)



At times there's something ethereal about the absorbing guitar work of virtuoso Calvin Keys and yet even on extended listenings of both the CDs in this 'twin-set' he never lost my attention. That's rare for any jazz artist but there again this man and his giant talent are rare.

He's been on the scene for many years and featured with legends like Earl Hines, Ray Charles, Ahmad Jamal and Pharoah Sanders and yet he prefers to life quietly in Oakland, California where in addition to appearing at major festivals he takes recording dates as featured guitarist and teaches at schools, colleges and music camps.

What makes this man different is that he's not solely a single string improviser but is just as happy exploring the chords of both his own and standard compositions with what - if he were a pianist we'd call - "block chords". His fluency in both disciplines is staggering and his flights of imagination seem to have no end. As I said he's rare and his work brings to mind that other giants with similarly endless flows of delightful original ideas like Paul Gonsalves, the pioneer Sidney Bechet, Django Reinhardt (of course!) and Sonny Rollins.

These are delightful tracks and if you're worried about trying someone new think Joe Pass, Wes Montgomery, Bucky Pizzarelli, Barney Kessel and then some. Yes, I think this guy is more listenable, more inventive, has more variety, more ideas, more interesting invention. In fact its time Pete King booked him for Ronnie Scott's. When he does I'll be there....

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