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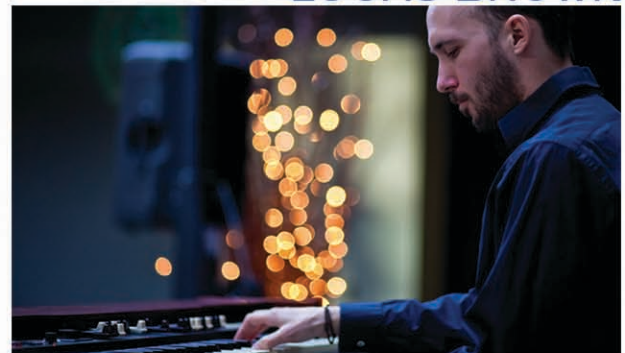
BLIND

MICE

VICTOR NORTH



LUCAS BROWN



WAYNE SMITH JR.



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JAZZ ORGAN TRIO



Three Blind Mice is a Jazz Organ Trio based out of Philadelphia, featuring Victor North on saxophones, Lucas Brown on Organ and Wayne Smith Jr. on drums.

Formed in the early 2000's by the intuition of Victor North, the trio's chemistry was immediate and thus began what would become Three Blind Mice: a modern organ trio steeped in the traditions of Jazz.

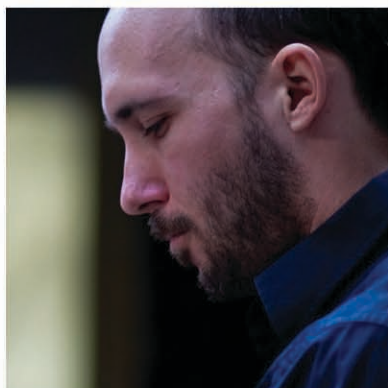
Originally hailing from Alaska, the now long-time transplant Victor teamed up with Philadelphians Lucas Brown and Wayne Smith, both of whom persevere to carry on the great tradition of rhythm section players from their hometown. Together the three have forged their own sound and feature a repertoire that is constantly growing with new original compositions. And additionally, on any given night, you may hear them paying homage to their many influences, playing the music of greats like John Coltrane, Hank Mobley, Larry Young, or Wes Montgomery, as well as contemporary artists such as Peter Bernstein.

But what is really unique about this group is the dynamic interplay, the intent listening, the infectious swing, the entire unit, each part moving separately but always together as one.

The Mice perform regularly around the Philadelphia area averaging almost 50 shows a year together. They have performed at all the staple Jazz venues in Philadelphia including Chris' Jazz Cafe, Time, and the now-defunct Ortlieb's Jazz Haus. Three Blind Mice have also performed at the Philadelphia Museum of Art as part of their Art After 5 Concert series and at the world-renowned Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts. The busy performing schedule also includes a monthly stint at Nodding Head Brew Pub in Philly that has run for the last decade.

BIOS

Saxophonist **Victor North** came to Philadelphia from Alaska to immerse himself in the "City Of Brotherly Love"'s rich jazz culture which has been home to so many jazz greats. Some of the many great musicians that Victor has had the opportunity to work with since coming to the East Coast are Mickey Roker, Charles Fambrough, John Swana, Terrel Stafford, Jimmy Bruno, Duane Eubanks and Jymmie Merrit. Victor also spent five years playing with afro-cuban jazz pianist, Elio Villafranca. For the past six years, Victor has led his own group, the Three Blind Mice, considered by many to be Philadelphia's premiere organ trio with organist Lucas Brown and drummer Wayne Smith, Jr. Currently, Victor performs in and around the Philadelphia/ New York area with the Captain Black Big Band led by pianist, Orrin Evans, the Lars Halle Jazz Orchestra, and can be heard frequently at Chris' Jazz Cafe, in Center City, Philadelphia. Victor has appeared at the Winter Jazz Fest in Manhattan, festivals in Cape May and Willingboro, as well as notable clubs such as the Jazz Gallery and Iridium. In addition to Three Blind Mice's debut album, Victor has recorded with Mike Boone, Mary Ellen Desmond, Orrin Evans, Ronnie Burrage, and is a featured soloist on the Captain Black Big Band album. Victor ran a weekly Jam Session at Chris' Jazz Cafe for over 15 years, mentoring countless young musicians along the way.



Lucas Brown is a performing artist and composer. He studied Jazz Performance at Temple University's Esther Boyer College of Music with Terrel Stafford, Bruce Barth, Ed Flanagan, Tom Lawton and others. His formal musical training began at age 5, studying classical piano. Lucas has studied classical composition with Robert Convery and Mark Rimple. Lucas performs with many different groups in the Philadelphia area. For the last decade he has been a member of saxophone legend Bootsie Barnes' trio. Lucas collaborates frequently with Philadelphians such as John Swana and Byron Landham. He also leads his own organ trio, Skyline. Lucas recording credits include Mike Kennedy's "Quartet #1", Skip Heller's "Out of Time" and Giga Shane's "Instinct". Lucas is featured on "Pianadelphia", produced by Todd Horton, which features Philadelphians performing the music of Philly Jazz greats. He is also featured on Mel Bay records DVD, "Jimmy Bruno: Live at Chris". His compositions are featured prominently in Three Blind Mice's 2011 debut album, "The Outsider". Lucas has performed with many noted musicians including Eric Alexander, Peter Bernstein, Larry McKenna, Gerald Veasley, Dr. Eddie Henderson, Tim Warfield, Ralph Bowen, Mickey Roker, Billy James, Duane Eubanks, and Sean Jones. Lucas has also appeared at festivals in Nashville, Omaha, Philadelphia, Washington DC and Somers Point as well as notable clubs including the Blue Note in Manhattan, Smoke, Smalls, Fat Cat, and The Smithsonian Museum and Blues Alley in Washington DC.

Wayne Smith Jr. was born and raised in Philadelphia and began playing drums at a young age. Wayne graduated from Philadelphia's Creative and Performing Arts High School and studied at Berklee College of Music. Wayne frequently performs in Philly as well as New York, Baltimore, and Washington D.C. Currently a member of the Sun Ra Arkestra, Wayne has toured with the Arkestra throughout Europe and Canada. He has also performed with well known musicians such as Donald Byrd, Orrin Evans, Abraham Burton, Duane Eubanks, Bootsie Barnes, John Swana, Sid Simmons, John Ellis, Marshall Allen and many more. Wayne has recorded with George Burton, Nina Bundy, Dan Peterson, Matt Davis' Aerial Photograph, Sun Ra Arkestra and Three Blind Mice with Victor North and Lucas Brown.



REPERTOIRE

Three Blind Mice's repertoire includes over 30 original songs authored by all three members of the band. They have recorded "The Outsider", "Now We Know What It Means", "Sleep", "Chapter 13" and "Intro" by Victor North and "Hatha", "Hong-dae Blues", "Sometimes", "Five" and "Mystery Blues" by Lucas Brown. Their incredibly extensive repertoire of Jazz tunes features both classic and contemporary composers. The list of classic composers includes: Joe Henderson, John Coltrane, Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock, McCoy Tyner, Bobby Hutcherson, Larry Young, Hank Mobley, Wes Montgomery, Tadd Dameron, Grant Green, Duke Pearson, Joe Zawinul, Woody Shaw, Horace Silver, George Coleman, Miles Davis, Eddie Harris, Lee Morgan, Jimmy Heath, Sonny Rollins, Kenny Durham, Don Patterson, Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn, Jackie Mclean, and Antonio Carlos Jobim. The Mice frequently perform pieces by contemporary Jazz artists such as Larry Goldings, John Ellis, Peter Bernstein, Joshua Redman, Sam Yahel, Orrin Evans, Kurt Rosenwinkel, Frank Lacy, and Ralph Bowen. They also like to put their spin on some popular tunes by artists ranging from Sting to Radiohead to Al Green. All three members of Three Blind Mice are seasoned veterans of the Philadelphia Jazz scene. Owing to the great tradition of Jazz in Philadelphia, the Mice have hundreds of standards at their fingertips that supplement their other repertoire. As a result, you will never hear the same set twice when you hear Three Blind Mice.

Examples of Classic Jazz Tunes:

Little B's Poem, Highway One, Isn't This My Music Around Me (Bobby Hutcherson), Chant, Is That So (Duke Pearson), Grand Central, Just For The Love, Straight Street, Like Sonny (John Coltrane), El Gaucho, Rio, Hammerhead, One by One (Wayne Shorter), Zoltan, Paris Eyes, Tyrone, Luny Tune (Larry Young), Full House, SOS, Trick Bag (Wes Montgomery), Sister Ruth, Opus de Don (Don Patterson).

Examples Of Standards:

Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye (Cole Porter), Stairway To The Stars (Glenn Miller), You Say You Care (Jule Styne), I've Grown Accustomed To Her Face (Lerner & Loewe), Double Rainbow, O Grande Amor, If You Never Come To Me (A.C. Jobim).

Examples of Contemporary Jazz Tunes:

DragonFly, Blues For Bulgaria, Sublime Indifference (Peter Bernstein), Words, The Acrobat, Blue Grass, Moonbird (Larry Goldings), Fliters (Kurt Rosenwinkel), Don't Fall Off The L.E.J. (Orrin Evans), Bonus Round (John Ellis), Slow Orbit (Sam Yahel), Tribalism (Joshua Redman).

Examples of Popular Tunes:

It's Probably Me, Seven Days (Sting), Knives Out, In Limbo, Blow Out (Radiohead), Let's Stay Together (Al Green), My Cherie Amour (a la Stevie Wonder), Rock With You, Human Nature (Michael Jackson).

EDUCATIONAL/RESIDENCY ACTIVITIES

Three Blind Mice can conduct a wide variety of educational workshops for musicians, music students or those who wish to deepen their appreciation of Jazz. The following are a few examples of some available workshops.

- “What is going on in Jazz?”

This is a workshop/lecture for general music students or music lovers to teach listeners what to listen for in Jazz and to develop a greater appreciation for what's going on in the music. We explain the basic approach in Jazz of taking a simple song form and using the basic blocks of music- melody, harmony, and rhythm- to create an arrangement of the song as an ensemble and then how to build an improvisation inside of that structure.

- “Small Jazz Ensemble Workshop”

This is a workshop/master-class designed for intermediate to advanced level music students with some experience playing jazz. Working together with the trio, student ensembles get a closer look into they dynamics of small group playing in Jazz. An emphasis is placed on communication, interaction, dynamics, and listening skills. Also discussed is how to create variety in a program when dealing with a small instrumentation and how to maximize and emphasize the strengths of your ensembles instrumentation.

- “Jazz Jam”

While many of us may be studying music in an academic setting, there is no replacement for the original “classroom” in Jazz: the bandstand. Three Blind Mice can run a Jam Session-style master-class where students/musicians can play with the band and the audience can get a direct insight into how a Jazz Jam Session works. The participants can benefit from the experience of playing with professional-level musicians and all attendees can participate in discussion after the performances. Discussion topics would include what types of tunes are commonly played at Jams, what are some basics you should know before “sitting in”and common bandstand etiquette.



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SOLSTICE

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Drum Circle at dawn, which will welcome summer literally with a bang.

The event especially showcases Philadelphia area talent. "We'll get to hear many bands, including newer ones we've never heard," said Ellen Houle of Fishtown, drummer for the Swinging Foxes jazz group. It's their first appearance at this event, and they'll perform at 8:30 p.m. in the Kimmel Center's Rendell Room.

"We take standards and we play them with new arrangements," said Houle. "We keep in mind the way they were originally composed and then we add our own flair. We pride ourselves on our arrangements."

They'll definitely play Duke Ellington classics. "We love him," said Houle. But they do newer pieces, too. "We're doing a Neko Case song, and not many jazz groups play her songs, but she's one of our influences," said Houle. "She takes older sounds and does them in a new way, which is what we try to do."

The drummer is also a member of the Tin Bird Choir, a four-member band that plays alternative country music, or what Houle described as "Pennsylvania barn rock."

Besides Houle, who uses a three-piece set up, the group consists of bassist Skip Moyer, guitarist Andy Boraz, and vocalist Amber Rae.

Another local jazz group on the program is Three Blind Mice. They, too, are making their first appearance at the solstice event.

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SOLSTICE

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"We're very much looking forward to it," said Victor North of Fishtown, the tenor sax player for the trio. "It's a cool event to be part of."

The band members focus on contemporary jazz, and their set will include some of their original pieces such as North's "Outsider." The Alaska native wrote it when he was new to the jazz scene in Philadelphia back in the 1990s. "It starts as classic straight-ahead jazz and then expands into a more open modern statement," he said.

Their set will also include an original piece, "Hiatus," by trio member Lucas Brown, the organist. "It's one of our favorites to perform live," says North. "It's a groovy, very rhythmic piece, kind of funky, which shows the ways in which our band plays precise rhythmic figures."

They'll probably play another original piece that Brown just wrote in April. It's titled Hong-dae Blues, named for a neighborhood in Seoul, South Korea, which Brown has visited twice. "It's kind of a happy place, with all types of music," said Brown, who first visited three years ago on a Buddhist meditation retreat and then returned just last month on vacation.

"It starts out with an off-kilter, angular rhythm which carries through, but we play through it seamlessly," said Brown. "We make it seem simple, even when we're doing complex rhythms."

At home in Northern Liberties, Brown has a Hammond B-3 organ, and also a portable version for gigs. A Philly native, he lived in Bridesburg and Abington, and has been in Northern Liberties since 2002.

North formed the trio five years ago and named it

Three Blind Mice. "That name just struck me because I think of blind mice as having extra alert hearing," he explained. "And they're always mischievous and playful."

The trio are regular performers at jazz clubs such as Chris' Jazz Café. North and Brown also have a standing Sunday gig at Nodding Head in Center City from noon to 2 p.m. Often, they add other musicians. And on the last Sunday of each month, the trio plays. They also play often at Ortlieb's Jazz Haus at 3rd and Poplar in Northern Liberties.

All three are seasoned jazz musicians. North, a native of Birdwood, Alaska, (near Anchorage) began playing tenor sax at age 16. He's been a Philly musician for 21 years, and was inducted two years ago into the Hall of Fame of at Chris' Jazz Café.

Besides heading Three Blind Mice, the busy jazzman coaches a high school jazz band at Monsignor Bonner school in Drexel Hill, and has participated in a teen summer jazz camp sponsored by the Kimmel Center.

Lucas Brown is just as versatile. He plays at varied Philly venues, performing jazz, jazz-fusion and experimental music. He holds the organ chair with Philly saxophone legend Bootsie Barnes. He also has an original organ duo with drummer Byron Landham. He's played at Ortlieb's every week, and will soon be part of an organ trio recording with Philly drummer Tom Cohen and guitarist Randy Johnston.

Drummer Wayne Smith Jr. of West Philly has performed in the city and beyond with well known musicians, and has also recorded with several. Recently he's been touring with the Sun Ra Arkestra, including recent trips through Europe.

All three jazzmen especially enjoy their Three Blind

Mice gigs. They're already booked for two nights at Ortlieb's during July 4th weekend. And they're getting ready to record their debut album.

"There's great chemistry among the three of us," said North.

Two years ago, they performed in Commonwealth Plaza at the Kimmel Center before a ticketed Sonny Rollins concert. Now they're eagerly looking forward to their first performance at the Summer Solstice Celebration this Saturday.

"The Kimmel Center is an internationally recognized home for music," said Brown. "And I like the idea that we're part of an event that features so many different kinds of music."♦♦

Welcome in the Solstice...

The Summer Solstice Celebration at the Kimmel Center takes place this Saturday, June 20, starting at 3 p.m. and continuing until dawn on June 21. A \$10 ticket (\$5 for children) includes every event. Tickets available at the box office or by calling 215 893-1999 and also online at www.kimmelcenter.org.

A complete listing of events and schedule is available at www.kimmelcenter.org/solstice.♦♦

Jazz Note SDP

This is a blog devoted to hard bop and avant garde jazz. Here I confess my faith: the center of genius in modern music is jazz; the center of genius in jazz is hard bop, and especially the body of music produced between the early 50's and the mid-60's. And at the center of it all is Miles Davis. This blog is especially aimed at readers who want to build a serious jazz library.

Sunday, May 8, 2011

See How They Run

I received a very nice CD from Lucas Brown, who plays organ for *The Three Blind Mice*. The Trio is led by sax man Victor North. Wayne Smith plays drums. The CD is entitled *The Outsider*. I have been dancing to it all day. The organ is relatively rare in jazz. It doesn't have the strike of the piano or bass, or the dense cry of the horns. Instead, it has a crushed velvet texture. I like it, and Brown's playing makes me want to hear more.



I also grew very fond of North's sax work by the end of the album. It gives me that "come on back around" feelin', here is something you should have paid more attention to. This is contemporary jazz worth listening to. Check out the web page above to get the CD. Trust me, you'll like it. I have a couple cuts on my Jazz Note station.

Posted by Ken Blanchard at 12:32 AM 1 comments Links to this post 
Labels: jazz organ, Lucas Brown, Victor North, Wayne Smith

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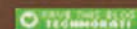
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Three Blind Mice Release debut CD- "The Outsider"

Philadelphia, PA - May, 2011 - Three Blind Mice, the Philadelphia-based organ trio, have released their long-awaited debut album, "The Outsider. The trio was formed in the early 2000's by Saxophonist Victor North and features Lucas Brown on organ and Wayne Smith Jr. at the drums.

"The Outsider" navigates predominantly through original music penned by Mr. North and Mr. Brown. The trio has been together for almost 8 years and the album certainly showcases their cooperative sound as well as the high degree of communication they share resulting from their long tenure together. All three members are regulars of the Philadelphia scene and highly steeped in that city's strong hard-bop tradition. Through their original music, the Mice present their unique voice while maintaining a strong tie to those roots. Victor North's composition "Now We Know What It Means" is a poignant tribute to the victims of the devastation of Hurricane Katrina and the title is a nod to the Louis Armstrong standard "Do You Know What It Means to Miss New Orleans?". Lucas Brown coaxes hymn-like sounds out of the organ in the introduction to his ballad "Hatha" while Mr. Smith provides his unique fire to the ironically titled closing track "Intro". Three Blind Mice make a strong case for the Modern Jazz organ trio with this hard-swinging date.

"The Outsider" is available for purchase online as a CD or MP3 at CD Baby as well as at Sound Of Market record store in Philadelphia.

For information: <http://www.threeblindmicejazz.com> or

Contact: threeblindmicejazz@gmail.com

Phone: 267-474-8476

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(sample release for appearance)

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Jazz Trio Three Blind Mice Appearing on (date) at (venue)

(Location – Month Day, 2011) – The foot-tapping swing of Jazz Organ Trio comes to (location) all the way from Philadelphia this week with Three Blind Mice. Heralded as one of “the tightest bands in Philly”, Saxophonist Victor North, Hammond B3 Organist Lucas Brown, and drummer Wayne Smith bring their grooving brand of Modern Jazz to town.

Following on the heels of their debut albums release, the trio will be performing some of their original tunes from that release, “The Outsider” as well as some classics from the Jazz repertoire. They are known for their extensive selection of tunes and the performance is sure to be a unique one.

The show will kick off at (time) with (#) sets of music. Tickets may be purchased in advance through (venue box office) or at the door for (price). More information about the group is also available through their website, [threeblindmicejazz.com](http://www.threeblindmicejazz.com) and the CD can be purchased there through CD Baby online. Any other questions about the performance can be directed to the venue at (phone/website).

For information: <http://www.threeblindmicejazz.com> or

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