

[Fresh Off Triumphant Wall Street Journal Feature, NY Times Arts & Leisure Preview, WNYC, New Yorker and Other Major Coverage, Steve Wilson Returns to His Role as Jazz Educator with Series of Academic Appearances](#)

[WSJ Headline for Wilson's 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration: "The Sideman Becomes the Star"](#)

Fresh off major coverage for his 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration, including a significant **WALL STREET JOURNAL** feature and other key placements (see below,) acclaimed saxophonist **Steve Wilson** has returned to his role as a respected jazz educator, with a series of academic appearances in recent and upcoming weeks.

Wilson recently completed a February 1 & 2 residency at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY, and a March 2-4 Residency at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, MD. This week, Wilson's educational efforts take him to the University of Delaware, in Wilmington. Upcoming academic appearances include April 8 at Lakewood Middle School in Lakewood, CO (with Lewis Nash,) and May 9-11, at University of Oregon in Eugene. With the exception of Eastman and Lakewood, CO, each visit includes Wilson appearing as guest soloist with the school jazz ensemble. Wilson also continues his regular teaching duties at Manhattan School of Music and at Purchase College Conservatory of Music.

On his April 8th visit to Lakewood, CO, Wilson will appear in performance with drummer Lewis Nash. 'Musical Dialogue with Lewis Nash' takes place at Lakewood Cultural Center: <http://www.lakewood.org/comres/page.cfm?ID=46>

On May 6 & 7, Wilson will be a guest performer at **Jazz @ Lincoln Center's Allen Room** celebration, **Songs of the Jazz Age**. Details here: *There's a reason why the Roaring 1920s was also known as the jazz age - it was an era when the spirit of swing permeated every facet of American life, from dancing to drinking to politics, and American jazz conquered the world. As part of our salute to Ken Burns and Lynn Novick's newest documentary series, "Prohibition," the ingenious Bill Charlap leads an all-star group including British jazz chanteuse Claire*

*Martin in a demonstration of how and why the 20s roared in music and song.*

Wilson's career recently shifted to the next level, as he celebrated his 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday at New York's Jazz Standard. Wilson featured six different bands over six nights, and each set during the birthday week saw lines out the door. The diverse shows each reflected a different stage of Wilson's evolution into what **NPR** describes as "**one of the finest saxophonists in the business.**"

Media coverage of the Birthday Celebration exceeded anything Wilson has experienced thus far in his career - in addition to **The Wall**



**Street Journal** feature, below, Wilson was the sole Pop/Jazz event previewed in **The New York Times**' Arts and Leisure section's 'The Week Ahead' page; **The New York Times** also ran two Friday Weekend Arts preview columns; Wilson received a **WNYC Radio** 'Gig Alert'; **Time Out NY** gave his shows a 'Critic's Pick'; the **Village Voice** ran a 'Voice Choice' preview and photo; **Jazziz Magazine** ran a feature preview in their February Digital Edition; **HotHouse Magazine** ran a cover story interview; **The New Yorker** ran a 'Goings On About Town' preview, **JazzPolice** ran a preview, and more.

## **THE WALL STREET JOURNAL**

*NY CULTURE - FEBRUARY 7, 2011 - By LARRY BLUMENFELD*

[http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703960804576119950902333990.html?mod=WSJ\\_NY\\_Culture\\_LEFTTopStories](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703960804576119950902333990.html?mod=WSJ_NY_Culture_LEFTTopStories)

### ***The Sideman Becomes the Star***

#### ***Steve Wilson Celebrates His Birthday With the Musicians Who Shared His Path***

A popular myth holds that the 1980s New York jazz scene was on its last legs, saved by a posse of young mainstream-minded neotraditionalists, mostly from New Orleans, who revived the music and its appeal. There were pockets of less conservative action—say, the layered rhythms of saxophonist Steve Coleman's Brooklyn-based scene. But, so the story goes, that was about it.

Saxophonist Steve Wilson will play at Jazz Standard for six nights beginning Wednesday, which is his 50th birthday. Musicians know the more complex truth. Not long after Steve Wilson brought his alto and soprano saxophones to New York in 1987, he learned that the sextet he'd joined, Out of the Blue, had only a few engagements booked. He'd gone from working regularly in and around Richmond, Va., to mostly subbing and looking for gigs. Yet Mr. Wilson sensed he'd found precisely what he came for. "I arrived with an open mind,"



Mr. Wilson said recently at a Midtown Manhattan lounge. "People wanted to place me in this or that camp—some even assumed I was from New Orleans. But I was here to soak it all up, and it was all here, all interesting. Guys I'd heard on all these great recordings were playing nearly every week somewhere, with someone. I figured I'd give it a year, see what happened." Cut to 2011. Mr. Wilson is still here. The stellar lineup—nearly all former and current musical associates—slated for his six-night, 50th-birthday engagement at Jazz Standard beginning Tuesday, hints at the diversity and depth of talent alongside which Mr. Wilson came of age in New York. And it makes clear that, by now, Mr. Wilson is essential to this city's jazz landscape. In the late '80s, largely at now-defunct clubs such as Bradley's and Sweet Basil, Mr. Wilson found the established players he'd sought out, including pianist Kenny Barron, bassist Buster Williams and drummer Victor Lewis. (When Mr. Williams invited Mr. Wilson into his band in 1990, "I figured I had arrived," Mr. Wilson said.) He also met distinctive players his own age with whom he quickly fell in.

The quartet anchoring Mr. Wilson's first two nights this week—with pianist Bruce Barth, bassist Ed Howard and drummer Adam Cruz—has played together since 1997. Mr. Wilson's connection with Mr. Barth began a decade earlier, in jam sessions at the pianist's Brooklyn apartment.

"Even then, Steve's voice was identifiable," said Mr. Barth, "earthy and funky but also extremely sophisticated in terms of harmony and rhythm. We also shared a sensibility—a love of blues and swing but an equal commitment to staying wide open and in the moment." That liberated sense and an easy camaraderie come through on a recent duet album, "Home" (We Always Swing). Mr. Wilson's Jazz Standard gig will reference a fair chunk of the more than 100 recordings on which he has played. He's recorded with both singers slated for opening night, Karrin Allyson and Carla Cook. Drummer Lewis Nash, who plays in Thursday night's expanded ensemble (with a string section) and Friday night's quintet, and pianist Mulgrew Miller (Friday) played on Mr. Wilson's earliest recordings as a leader. Mr. Wilson was integral to "Kind of Brown," a sleekly swinging 2009 album by bassist Christian McBride (Friday and Sunday). And he plays on a forthcoming quartet album from drummer Jeff "Tain" Watts (Saturday and Sunday). If the music's stylistic palette shifts night to night, "that reflects the playlists of the radio stations I grew up hearing," Mr. Wilson said.

And it owes to his broad experience. Mr. Wilson got his first top-tier touring gig with vibraphonist Lionel Hampton in 1988. He played in some of jazz's most creative small groups through the '90s, especially those led by drummers Ralph Peterson and Leon Parker, and with such large ensembles as the Mingus Big Band and the Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra. He joined a terrific edition of bassist Dave Holland's quintet, then left that band for Origin, a chamber-like acoustic sextet led by pianist Chick Corea. "Steve quickly became far more than the saxophone player in that band," said Mr. Corea. "We became partners. I began to write with him in mind." A 1996 New York Times profile called Mr. Wilson "the quintessential sideman," which might have seemed damning praise to some career-conscious colleagues. But he remembers feeling pleased. In fact, he laments "what the industry did in the 1980s and '90s to dismantle the apprenticeship system by promoting young guys who maybe weren't ready to be bandleaders." The spotlight thrown squarely on Mr. Wilson through his Jazz Standard engagement is overdue, according to former employer Buster Williams. "This week makes you stand back and appreciate what an innovative force Steve has been," he said. "But he was just a kid when he started with me. When did all this happen?" —Mr. Blumenfeld writes about jazz for the Journal.



## The NY TIMES - Arts and Leisure

'The Week Ahead' Preview and photo - By Ben Ratliff, 2/4/11

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/06/arts/06weekaheadweb.html?scp=1&sq=steve%20wilson&st=cse> **Pop/Jazz - Ben Ratliff**

The alto and soprano saxophonist **STEVE WILSON**, who moved to New York in the late 1980s, is one of his jazz-playing generation's greatest all-rounders. A learned musician with a bright and beautiful tone, he made sense of the fundamentals — Johnny Hodges, Charlie Parker and Cannonball Adderley, say — and combined them

with other currents in jazz's fragmented development after Ornette Coleman. Lots of bandleaders have hired him for his clear, lyrical improvising, including Mulgrew Miller, Dave Holland, Chick Corea and Leon Parker. In turn he's hired dozens of New York's better musicians for his own projects. At the Jazz Standard he will celebrate his 50th birthday week surrounded by his peers, showing much of his range. His quartet, including the pianist Bruce Barth, the bassist Ed Howard and the drummer Adam Cruz, will appear with the

singers Carla Cook and Karrin Allyson (Tuesday) and alone (Wednesday). On Thursday he'll play music from Charlie Parker's "Bird With Strings" with a string ensemble directed by the guitarist David O'Rourke; on Friday, in an ad hoc band called Special Edition, with Mr. Miller, the bassist Christian McBride, the drummer Lewis Nash and the trumpeter Freddie Hendrix; and on Saturday and Sunday in another band of high-profile friends, the Leaders, with the pianist Geoffrey Keezer, Mr. McBride on bass, and Jeff (Tain) Watts on drums.



## WNYC GIG ALERT

2/11/2011 By Marlon Bishop

<http://culture.wnyc.org/articles/music-hub/2011/feb/11/gig-alert-steve-wilson/> (click link to hear audio sample)

*The New York Times* called alto saxophonist Steve Wilson the "quintessential sideman" in 1996, an apt description since he's played with just about everybody in his 50 years on the planet,

including Dave Holland, Chick Corea, and Lionel Hampton. In the process, he's contributed his muscular, groove-heavy bebop solo style to over 100 records. Now, at long last, Wilson is stepping out from the shadows and is shining as a major bandleader himself. This week, he's celebrating his 50th birthday with concerts at the Jazz Standard. Each night, Wilson will lead a different group filled with appearances from some heavyweight friends. Expect to see trumpeter Freddy Hendrix, drummer Jeff "Tain" Watts, and bassist Cristian McBride gracing the stage. This funky, free-wheeling track is from *Home*, a live album of duets recorded in 2010 with pianist Bruce Barth.



**NY TIMES WEEKEND ARTS** by Nate Chinen 2/11/11:

★ **Steve Wilson's 50th Birthday Celebration** (Friday through Sunday) Mr. Wilson, an alto and soprano saxophonist who combines economy and modernity in his playing, turned 50 on Wednesday, and he has been celebrating with a brisk succession of bands. On Friday he connects with the trumpeter Freddie Hendrix, the pianist Mulgrew Miller, the bassist Christian McBride and the drummer Lewis Nash. On Saturday and Sunday he turns the tables on several of the bandleaders he has worked with over the years: Mr. McBride, the pianist Geoffrey Keezer and the drummer Jeff (Tain) Watts. At 7:30

and 9:30 p.m., with an 11:30 set on Friday and Saturday, Jazz Standard, 116 East 27th Street, Manhattan , (212) 576-2232, jazzstandard.net; \$30. (Chinen)

2/4/11: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/04/arts/music/04jazz.html>



## JAZZIZ Magazine - Digital Edition

February Preview  
Feature - login to  
**Jazziz.com** to flip  
through — Steve Wilson

'50 WITH A BANG' is on page 18.

**HOT HOUSE JAZZ MAGAZINE** – Cover feature –  
read the full article, here: <http://www.hothousejazz.com/>





Versatility and informality are the saxophonist's calling cards. Wilson's wise mainstream swing allows room for both subtle avant notions and witty r&b maneuvers, and his best work is marked by agility and nuance. Vocalists, string sections, heavy-duty guests - these birthday gigs at the Standard all week will be a fun way to turn 50.



**TIME OUT NY - CRITIC'S PICK -**

<http://newyork.timeout.com/music-nightlife/music/727895/steve-wilson-50th-birthday-celebration>

Long one of New York's most dependably satisfying performers, bandleaders and sidemen, alto saxophonist Steve Wilson hits the half-century mark in style this week with an engagement that finds him tangling with all sorts of friends. Vocal fanciers will want to be on hand Tue 8 when Karrin Allyson and Carla Cook join Wilson, but there's something special happening every single night.



**The New Yorker**

[http://www.newyorker.com/arts/events/nightlife/2011/02/14/110214goni\\_GOAT\\_nightlife?currentPage=2](http://www.newyorker.com/arts/events/nightlife/2011/02/14/110214goni_GOAT_nightlife?currentPage=2)

The saxophonist and flutist **Steve Wilson**, a fixture on the contemporary jazz scene as both a valued sideman and a skilled bandleader, turns fifty. A weeklong birthday celebration finds him leading five different bands, collaborating with the likes of Karrin Allyson, Carla Cook, Christian McBride, and Mulgrew Miller.

**More about Steve Wilson:**

**Steve Wilson's** headlining stand at the legendary Village Vanguard in New York City was documented by **NPR** and featured in a riveting 'Live at the Village Vanguard' broadcast:

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=125076907>.

Wilson previewed the appearance with a terrific interview about the state of jazz on **WBGO's** 'The Checkout' with Josh Jackson: <http://www.wbgo.org/thecheckout/?p=2154>. While at the Vanguard, Wilson and his band Wilsonian's Grain were filmed for inclusion in an **MSNBC-TV** segment of "Your Business" on the historic venue and its proprietor, Lorraine Gordon.

Wilson, described as "*an endlessly adaptable alto and soprano saxophonist, at home in myriad settings,*" by **The NY Times'** Nate Chinen, and as a "*stellar altoist*" by **Time Out NY**, continues to generate rave coverage for his eclectic activities. In addition to an appearance at The Kennedy Center (broadcast on **NPR**), Wilson recently appeared live on nationwide television, with a multi-song performance on **The CW Network**. Watch clips of his performance here: <http://www.wgntv.com/news/liveperformances/wgntv-live-music-steve-wilson.0.672046.story>

Wilson is among the most well liked, in-demand and respected figures in jazz. **JAZZIZ.com** echoed this sentiment, calling him "*an especially skilled and sensitive saxophonist...*" **JAZZIZ** followed up with news of Wilson's tributes to jazz greats Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Ornette Coleman and Joe Zawinul. See the article, here: <http://www.jazziz.com/events/2009/12/03/steve-wilson-to-honor-davis-coltrane-coleman-and-zawinul/>



**NPR featured Steve Wilson on JazzSet:**

**Steve Wilson: A First-Call Saxophonist**

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=102700887&ps=rs>

In addition to the airing of his 2009 Kennedy Center event and his 2010 Village Vanguard show, NPR has featured Wilson in a live recording with the Blue Note 7. He was also recorded with Christian McBride and Inside Straight at the Detroit Jazz Festival, and was featured as a Special Guest with the Michael Wolff Trio at the Kennedy Center last year.

Wilson's multiple roles as a band leader, sideman, educator and jazz historian have lead journalists to praise him as "*a dynamic improviser,*" "*a musician's musician,*" "*one of the finest saxophone players today,*" and more. DC's Express (A publication of The Washington Post,) described his recordings as "*captivating.*" John Murph's interview with Steve may be seen here:

[http://www.expressnighout.com/content/2009/03/finances\\_and\\_all\\_that\\_jazz\\_steve\\_wilson.php](http://www.expressnighout.com/content/2009/03/finances_and_all_that_jazz_steve_wilson.php)

Wilson's performance at the Kennedy Center, heard on NPR JazzSet (click NPR link, above,) was also previewed in the DCist:

[http://dcist.com/2008/10/16/preview\\_steve\\_wilson\\_the\\_kc\\_jazz\\_cl.php](http://dcist.com/2008/10/16/preview_steve_wilson_the_kc_jazz_cl.php)

JAZZIZ.com featured Wilson in a NEWS column timed to his '09 Orchestral debut: *STEVE WILSON - A TOUCH OF CLASSICAL* <http://www.jazziz.com/news/2009/06/25/steve-wilson-a-touch-of-classical/>

In a live review in **ALL ABOUT JAZZ – NY**, Wilson's performance at the Rubin Museum in New York was described as follows: "*Wilson wove his sound through the music in a manner that was spellbinding in its nuance and attentiveness to dynamics.*"

[http://www.allaboutjazz.com/newyork/aaj\\_ny\\_200809.pdf](http://www.allaboutjazz.com/newyork/aaj_ny_200809.pdf)

Nominated once as Alto Player of the Year by the **Jazz Journalists Association** (and this year for Soprano Saxophone Player of the year,) and profiled in **ALL ABOUT JAZZ**, Wilson is known for his modest, warm personality...and for his in-depth knowledge of all-things-jazz. Read the major 'career' feature on Steve Wilson, from ALL ABOUT JAZZ, here: <http://www.allaboutjazz.com/php/article.php?id=29437>

At <http://www.stevewilsonmusic.com/>, visitors can sample new tunes and see performance footage. The site, part of the Jazz Corner family, also includes a streaming audio player, details of Wilson's numerous band configurations, and more.

For more information about Steve Wilson, or to set up an interview, please contact [SethCohenPR@earthlink.net](mailto:SethCohenPR@earthlink.net) or 212-873-1011.