

# PAULMEYERSREVIEWS

## Quotes

"First of all, Paul Meyers is a brilliant musician, but most of all he has a broad musical concept. He has such great sensitivity where you can feel the music coming out of his guitar and not just hear the notes. I know this will continue to serve him well, always."

**--Andy Bey**

"With his gleaming tone, assured rhythmic stance and rich sense of melody, Paul Meyers makes a very persuasive guitarist."

**--Zan Stewart, The New Jersey Star-Ledger**

"...one of the most eloquent jazz guitarists since Kenny Burrell..."

**--James Gavin, New York Times**

"Paul Meyers is a guitarist's guitarist. He displays a creative, fresh approach to harmonic and linear playing. He's a brilliant soloist and accompanist and excels in contemporary jazz. His arranging and performances are as good as it gets."

**--Gene Bertoncini [Internationally renowned jazz guitarist]**

"A lot of guitarists play bossa nova, but they don't catch that jazz tinge that Joao Gilberto has. The only cat I've heard that does is Paul Meyers."

**--Jon Hendricks**

"A beautifully inventive and supportive player, Paul is such a pleasure to hear and to work with--a real pro, who's love of the music always shines through."

**--Karrin Allyson, Concord Recording Artist**

"One of the great things about NYC's jazz scene is the presence of musicians like Paul Meyers - so consistently satisfying that we sometimes take his greatness for granted!"

**--Jack Kleinsinger, Highlights in Jazz**

"Paul Meyers' classical guitar artistry finds him equally at home performing musical styles ranging from Bossa Nova to Be-Bop to Bartok - all played with impeccable technique and true passion. His intensive workshops - especially those designed for classical guitarists - open new worlds of musical possibilities even for those who have had years of private lessons and conservatory training."

**--Dennis Koster [Internationally recognized concert artist and author of the "Flamenco Guitar" method books]**

What I appreciate and love in Meyers' playing is his huge sense of groove and inner pulse. In addition to this, his tone is always clear, clean and he is definitely a great swinger. Needless for him to play the billions of speedy and insignificant notes, unlike too many jazz (or not) players of our time. His "speech" is precise and above all he is not a "talkative" musician and I do like that. Paul Meyers plays actually the way we all need in a musician: telling a nice story.

**--Roland Dyens, Guitarist and Composer**

**Teacher at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Paris (France)**

"I first heard guitarist Paul Meyers live in a duo setting with his long-time musical partner Vera Mara, a fabulous singer from Brazil. She and Paul were weaving in and out of that music so beautifully together, I have been a fan ever since."

**--Karrin Allyson, Concord Recording Artist**

"The other side of Paul Meyers is as a teacher|clinician. Mr. Meyers has a unique ability to approach highly complex musical subjects and present each component in a practical yet multi-faceted way that allows participants to begin playing portions at tonight's gig, jam session or rehearsal...while perfecting the premise over a lifetime."

**--MICHAEL BILLER, Executive Director Seattle Jazz Guitar Society**

(following my workshop there, January 2009)

## "World On A String" Reviews

Paul Meyers has managed to assemble an all-star cast for his latest recording "World on a String", and these world class musicians are at their best on every tune. By bringing together Helio Alves, piano, Leo Traversa, bass, Vanderlei Pereira, drums, and Donny McCaslin, sax, Meyers has not only chosen some of the best instrumentalists on the scene today, but also some of the best ensemble players around. The band plays extremely well together as their communication during written out and improvised sections borders on ESP. Apart from playing well together as an ensemble, each musician also steps up and delivers magnificently crafted solos throughout the album.

Not being content to let these great musicians simply bring their different personalities to the tunes, Meyers has produced a variety of intricate and memorable arrangements for each song. While Meyers uses traditional hits and punches, what really stands out is his ability to use this small ensemble as though it were a big band or orchestra. He is constantly working with a different combinations of instruments, much like a big band, and on several occasions he drops out the rest of the ensemble and focuses the listener's attention on one soloist playing unaccompanied. This diverse use of textures really brings out a sense of variety and intrigue that is often lacking in small group writing today.

Apart from being a gifted composer, having penned the majority of tunes for the album, Meyers is also a virtuoso guitarist and improviser. Having studied with Gene Bertoncini, most listeners will definitely find elements of the great guitarist in Meyers' playing. Though far from being a mere imitator, Meyers is able to take Gene's influence, among others, and bring his own voice to each and every melody and solo he performs. As well, his lines are delivered with a hard driving sense of groove that only helps to accentuate his melodic and harmonic vocabulary. I highly recommend this album to any fan of jazz and especially jazz guitar. In a day and age when it seems that just about anyone with a laptop can release a CD it is refreshing to hear an artist take the time and effort to produce a work of art and not just a product. This album is compelling from start to finish and definitely deserves wide attention from the jazz listening public.

## **--Matthew Warnock, Just Jazz Guitar**

About a minute-thirty into the opening track, you finally realize you're listening to the classic title tune, but acoustic guitarist Meyers takes us through a contemporary intro before hitting us with a smooth version of the melody. It's not until the second track, the fine samba "Eyes That Smile," that we hear his true essence as an artist come out. While Meyers can swing, it's his prowess as a bossa and Latin specialist that makes us listen. This isn't just Jobim-style bossa, it's bossa with a sense of modernity, of polyrhythmic sensitivity, of chordal complexity. Meyers isn't content to blow a soft breeze onto the listener. He adds an urban feel, even on the light "Twilight," which creates atmosphere rather than just melody. Meyers is helped along by fiery saxophonist and flutist Donny McCaslin and pianist Helio Alves, along with his rhythm section. Meyers is a nimble guitarist and an inspired composer in this modern jazz-meets-bossa setting. It remains interesting throughout, which should appeal to both bossa and new jazz fans.

## **--Kyle O'Brian, Jazz Society of Oregon**

### **"Paul Meyers Quartet featuring Frank Wess" Reviews**

With his latest recording, Paul Meyers and his quartet have created a straightforward bit of jazz that is undemanding and smooth. Frank Wess is along for the ride on flute and tenor saxophone. His presence adds texture and cool to Meyers' beautifully brilliant nylon string guitar.

Meyers' record is again couched in the sense of security that drove his superb *World on a String*. His quartet, balanced out by Martin Wind's acoustic bass and Tony Jefferson's drums, is just as comfortable as the guitarist and their command of varying time signatures and musical varieties is excellent. The feat of their performance is made all the more special by the reality that they'd never played together as a group prior to going into the studio to record this selection.

The album rolls through some standards, drawing in frequent collaborator and vocalist Andy Bey on "Lazy Afternoon" to help pull some extra consistency out of Meyers' Brazilian mood.

It really is the combination of Meyers and Wess that drives this album, however. The impeccable meshing of Meyers' deliberate, capable guitar with Wess' bold, assertive flute and sax sets these pieces up for lots of compelling banter. The two performers play magnificently off of one another, engaging the listener in the very real and very engaging conversation of jazz.

"Blue Lantern" is a terrific example of this record's ability to transmit their dialogue. The piece is a little extended blues jam, almost, but Wess and Meyers give it more oomph thanks to a bit of interplay involving guitar and flute. They trade choruses elegantly.

One of the things that really captivated me about Meyers' playing when I first heard it on *World on a String* was his use of rhythm as he plays guitar. The same sense of timing and pace is present on this record, too, and tracks like "In the Wee Small Hours of the Morning" enable him to wrap his strings around a comfortable bossa nova with ease.

Cuts like "Just One of Those Things" benefit from Meyers' inventiveness, while the Billie Holiday standard "I Cover the Waterfront" builds tension and sass organically.

There's a reason Paul Meyers is one of the most in-demand players in modern jazz. His command of his beautiful nylon string guitar is astounding and his ability to compose for a group he's never played for before makes him one of the most adventurous, unique and composed arrangers I've had the pleasure of listening to in quite some time. This record solidifies the fact that Meyers is in a class all his own.

**--Jordan Richardson - [blogcritics.org](http://blogcritics.org) - Vancouver, Canada**

This record, very simply titled, brings together two fine musicians. One is Paul Meyers the stylish nylon-string guitarist who adorns the music of Jon Hendricks, and the legendary Frank Wess, a tenor saxophonist and flutist with perhaps the most burnished vocal styles on both instruments. This in itself, achieves a sort of Zen-like Nirvana while soaking in the exquisite exchanges between the two.

Then to add the deeply moving, regal baritone of Andy Bey on "Lazy Afternoon" is like a sudden and unexpected shower of pure gold. The album is a collection of straight-ahead blues and popular standards, but each is so fresh that it feels as if they have been played for the first time.

On tenor saxophone, Wess' delicious singing-style mixes a slightly indigo, smoothly throaty tone with glorious arpeggios and a fading vibrato that characterized his playing for twelve years with one of Count Basie's finest bands. Wess continues to thrill in much the same manner matching the sparkling, resonant inflections of Meyers' nylon-stringed guitar. On flute, Wess is without peer. Here he combines a brilliant altissimo fluttering with masterful manipulation of the instrument to do his bidding. His solos capture offertories made vertically, which seem to ascend on great thermals like eagles with wings gently frozen in flight. He motions notes to move inside out and round and about, pausing for breath, only to make a new whorl in the thin air around the music.

This is a perfect foil for Meyers' mostly echoing resonance, but sometimes clipped tones. The guitarist plucks and slides across the strings with fluid grace. His choice of notes reflects old-fashioned sentimentality, but he infuses them with echoes and memories of future past. His linear measures are filled with ideas where softer emotions abound. The more he plays the fresher he sounds and here he is aided and abetted by svelte rhythm twins-the superbly melodious Martin Wind on acoustic bass and the elegant, pulsating drummer, Tony Jefferson. Wind and Jefferson play with an understanding that borders on telepathy and when each is offered a chance to stretch, they defer to the melody with unforgettable effect.

The elegant swing and shuffle of Billy Strayhorn's "Snabor" sets things off and there is no looking back after that. The exchange between Wind and Meyers on this track is a thrill to hear as bassist's choice of notes rarely land on the root notes of the chords he chooses to play, in somewhat the same vein as Ray Brown does with such finesse. Meyers' "Blue Lantern" has a pulse that is inviting and perfect for Wess' sliding flute. The master truly shines on his own "Menage a Bleu," reaching seemingly unreachable highs on "In The Wee Small Hours Of The Morning" and George and Ira Gerswin's "Who Cares."

This is an album that crackles with delight and begs the question: What if these gentlemen get together again and again? What wonders will ensue?

**-- Raul d'Gama Rose, All about Jazz**

Seems to me that acoustic guitar is fading slowly from sight in the jazz world. So when you encounter one played with the panache and subtlety of Paul Meyers, you want to breathe it in. Of course, it hurts not a bit that Meyers has called upon one of the sages of the tenor and flute, Frank Wess. The former Basie band hero is still playing as wonderfully as ever, and his tenor cooks up a nice entree on the opener, a Billy Strayhorn tune called "Snibor." Wess then switches to flute for a lively Meyers original. An additional treat is singer Andy Bey, whose vocal is rich and riveting on "Lazy Afternoon." The pairing of Meyer's dessert-like guitar and Wess's even keel reed expertise is exceptionally pleasing to the ear. Additional highlights here include standards like "In The Wee Small Hours of the Morning," "Just One of Those Things" and "I Cover the Waterfront." Incidentally, the quartet is rounded out by Martin Wind, bass, and Tony Jefferson, drums. It's a pretty special encounter from note one to note last.

**--George Fendel, Jazz Society of Oregon**

Guitarist Paul Meyers's list of credits reads like a Who's Who in Jazz: a versatile and elegant player who is much in demand, he tours and teaches and has led or co-led ten CDs. Yet for some reason, prior to this there were no Meyers reviews among the 23,000 that are archived at AllAboutJazz.com. This is unfortunate, since Meyers is clearly one of the best guitarists and composers around, a fact which is immediately evident on the CD, Paul Meyers Quartet Featuring Frank Wess. The legendary Wess contributes both tenor and flute to the session, demonstrating with every lick why he became an NEA Jazz Master in 2007. The other talented personnel are bassist Martin Wind, drummer Tony Jefferson, and vocalist Andy Bey, whose version of "Lazy Afternoon" is so atmospheric that it's practically visual. There's a nice balance here between standards and originals, with two fine Meyers compositions and one by Wess helping to create what Meyers describes as "a fun, simple blowing session." While I might choose "uncluttered" over "simple" we definitely agree on the "fun" part, since this is a swinging excursion from beginning to end. What makes the CD especially fresh and spontaneous is the fact that the four musicians never rehearsed this material together before recording it. Highlights abound, including: Wess's sly "Menage a Bleu," rollicking versions of "Just One of Those Things" and "One for Miss D," the soulful Brazilian sway of "In the Wee Small Hours of the Morning," Wind's pitch-

perfect, propulsive walking on "Blue Lantern" and the tasty explorations of relatively lesser-known Strayhorn ("Snibor") and Gershwin ("Who Cares?"). Meyers is impressive throughout, playing with class and eloquence and demonstrating, once again, that it's the choices that mark a great player, not just the technique. Although the CD could use a snappier title, its music engages the listener from beginning to end, and will surely inspire an interest in Meyers's performances as well as the rest of his growing discography.

---**Dr. Judith Schlesinger, AllAboutJazz.com**

## "Dusk to Dawn" Reviews

"Paul Meyers' 2004 solo release "Dusk to Dawn" is nothing short of brilliant. With a mix of originals (Sunset), standards (Detour Ahead) and arrangements of pop tunes (Norwegian Wood and Overjoyed), Meyers keeps listeners glued to their speakers the whole time. Performed entirely on a nylon-string classical guitar, Meyers pays homage to Gene Bertoncini, Lenny Breau and Ralph Towner while never sounding like an imitation. His melodic and harmonic concepts are modern, yet accessible, and the melody always comes through no matter what odd voicing or harmony is moving underneath it. Also there is a wonderful Brazilian flavor that comes out, not only in Meyers' choice of tunes like Naomi Nandi, but also in the strong rhythmic ideas that are heard throughout.

This album is a "must have" for any fan of jazz guitar, especially solo jazz guitar. It is definitely a welcome approach to solo guitar that can be enjoyed by anyone."

--**Matthew Warnock, Just Jazz Guitar Magazine**

## "Euforia" Reviews

"The music of the Euforia Trio is a wonderfully personal, deeply felt presentation of Brazilian air. Mapleshade producer Pierre Sprey reports in nicely detailed liner notes that his attention to the project was hooked after the following exchange with bassist Debriano: "You guys play a lot of Jobim, Gilberto Gil, all of those Brazilian standards?" "No," replied Santi, 'most of our music is stuff that either Paul or I write.'" It takes gumption to take such a crowd pleasing genre as

Brazilian music and cast most of your repertoire as originals, which Euforia has done with 9 out of 14 tracks here. Any fears of a bare-bones approach that drains the music of color and vitality should be checked at the door, as the three musicians apply these qualities in abundance. "Paul Meyers, a thoroughly enjoyable guitarist who I could listen to all day, is in the spotlight most of the time, and his vocabulary of gentle, sheen-producing strums ("Linden Boulevard"), slightly reverbed Jazz chords (Wes Montgomery's "Twisted Blues" recast as an altered samba), and a great tone (take your pick), assures a beam well spent. Vanderlei Pereira is a quietly forceful drummer who pushes everything along with thoughtful sizzle, as on Horace Silver's "Peace" or the bassist's Latin "Xin-Xin Swing." I can't remember the last time I encountered Debriano--he seems to have been around forever at this point--but it's a pleasure to re-make his acquaintance. Strong tone, supple technique, intense focus--he's got it all. Six of the tunes are his, including the brightly idiomatic "Tio", the burning "Linden Boulevard," and the dramatic solo "Alegria," which recalls phrases from Charlie Haden's 1969 "Song for Che." "The trio also deserves mention for not being afraid to use the language of Free for two totally improvised tracks" "Euforia and Conexao" show them capable of speaking competently in that tongue while retaining the overall feel of the project. Sprey also mentions in his liners that the first session with the band had them using extra musicians, an idea which was abandoned by the third session, whose results are found here. Personally, I'd like to hear these guys with additional players at some point, just for the pleasure of hearing them bounce their strong ideas and chops off of other people. They're that good. But Euforia shows that they also function beautifully in their prime element. Recommended.

--Larry Nel, **Cadence Magazine**

## "Blues for the Millennium" Reviews

"An intelligent choice of music and excellent playing throughout marks this CD as something a bit special. Anyone who records Bela Bartok, Dizzy Gillespie and Dori Caymmi on the same CD is nothing if not eclectic. Furthermore, none of these vastly different musics are ever compromised. Meyers manages to get beneath their surface, revealing a surprising depth of musical understanding and sensitivity. A former student of Gene Bertoncini, Paul Meyers builds on his mentor's iconoclastic vision of musical multiplicity with unparalleled success."

**--Adrian Ingram, Just Jazz Guitar Magazine**

"Meyers has mastered many kinds of guitar-playing, all with a very direct and seductively melodic approach. Like his teacher-mentor, Gene Bertoncini, Meyers is drawn to a synthesis of classical and jazz guitar. The last six cuts on this rich recording -- it is hard to believe there is only one person playing on a Takamine classical guitar without amplification or over-dubbing -- are devoted to Bela Bartok's short pieces. Among the jazz highlights are the title cut, an original which starts the proceedings very effectively, a Herbie Hancock arrangement of Bronislav Kaper's classic "On Green Dolphin Street," and Cole Porter's "I've Got You Under My Skin," which Meyers certainly manages to do with his music."

**--Lee Lo, N.Y. Jazz Newsletter**

"In his remarkable solo guitar CD "Blues for the Millennium" Paul Meyers shows what's possible with only those six strings at his disposal. It's hard to believe that this recording contains no overdubs as a number of times I'd swear that there might be as many as three guitars playing at once. Paul succeeds in documenting his solo guitar work in a setting that not only showcases his talents as a performer, but demonstrates his abilities as a producer of the first order. His programming displays an incredibly rich mixture of musical styles including Be-Bop, Brazilian, Bartok, and the Blues. Throughout this CD the essence of each of these styles is purely distilled into the 'real deal'; i.e. each style sounds awfully true to the tradition that spawned it. Additionally, the lush, warm, excellently recorded sound captures a quality rarely found on most of today's CDs: genuine feeling! The blues are in evidence all over this disc. Make no mistake about it, these are happy blues. And this is music for the soul; music to lift the spirit!"

**--Ray Drummond, renowned bassist & composer**

## **"Brasil and Co" Reviews**

"Like Yankee fans, devotees of Brazilian music can never get enough. And those who only know the tunes of Jobim, classics as they may be, are in for a treat when they expand their collection to other native masters, like Pixinguinha and Toninho Horta, especially when performed with a clean, authentic, heartfelt

approach. One of the best duos around is vocalist Vera Mara and guitarist Paul Meyers, who've been performing together for seven years. Here they recruit a group of fine musicians to produce an intriguing and varied CD which includes an ethereal Wayne Shorter composition. Mara has a pure, pitch-perfect voice that sounds like sunshine; a former backup singer for Gilberto Gil, she's soulful and precise even on breakneck tempos, like the Carmen Miranda signature, "Tico-Tico", or scatting on Hermeto Pascoal's "Bebe". Mara sings and writes in both English and Portuguese -- on four tracks, her own lyrics -- and also plays a mean triangle and shaker. Meyers has a Master's degree in guitar from the Manhattan School of Music and an impressive jazz pedigree, playing and/or recording with the likes of Kenny Barron, Jon Hendricks, Clare Fischer, and Wynton Marsalis. He's a strong, lyrical player and fine composer; his "Seresta" is one of the CD's high points. Veteran pianist Cidinho Teixeira brightens four tracks and contributes his winsome "Julia" and sensuous "Amor Prohibio" to the mix. There are two songs by Jobim: a "Meditation" that transcends cliché and has a beautiful ending, and a spare and swinging "Double Rainbow", both enhanced by Meyers's overdub accents on MIDI guitar. The CD closes with "E", which was a big hit in Brazil, ending a recording that's full of danceable energy -- it's an artful, enjoyable combination of the traditional and new."

**--Judith Schlesinger, All Music Guide**

"Brasil and Company is a jazzy quartet featuring Vera Mara and guitarist Paul Meyers. This collaboration of 13 tracks has a light, breezy feel, with Mara's vocals shifting between Portuguese and English. The other members of the quartet are bassist Itaguara Brandao and percussionist Chris Eddleton. Among the selections are the Carmen Miranda classic "Tico-Tico no Fuba" and two songs written by Tom Jobim, "Meditation" and "Double Rainbow". There are also a few tracks in the folksier style of Pixinguinha and Gonzaguinha, as well as several original compositions. Mara, a former backup vocalist for Gilberto Gil, is a delightful singer - she captures the lilt wonderfully and has a special knack for scat singing. The quartet works well, and Meyers' guitar playing is a standout. Fans of bossa nova and fusion jazz will want to check this one out."

**--Micheal Cowan, Rhythm Magazine**

"This CD has one of the most creatively assembled sets of Brazilian tunes I've seen in a long time. They've carefully chosen a broad range from the pop and

jazz repertoire, from classics like Pixinguinha's "Um aZero" and Zequinho de Abreu's "Tico -Tico No Fuba" to Jobim standards "Meditation" and "Double Rainbow" to some Hermeto Pascoal, Toninho Horta, Wayne Shorter and even "E", a Brazilian hit by the late Gonzaguinha. And the band. led by Horta-inspired guitarist Paul Meyers, has rendered xome imaginative and peppy arrangements. ... ( Vocalist Vera Mara ) has some bright spots, like the acrobatic vocalise on "Tico-Tico No Fuba" and a lovely rendition of their original composition "Malicia"."

**--Mike Quinn, Jazz Times**