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Home » Articles » Album Reviews

Alexa Tarantino: Winds Of Change



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August 8, 2019
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Coming at her music with an impressive embrace of style and tradition, and blending a natural youthful inquisitiveness and confidence to make the music her own, saxophonist-flautist and full-of-flair composer [Alexa Tarantino](#)—along with pianist [Christian Sands](#), bassist [Joe Martin](#), drummer [Rudy Royston](#) and trombonist [Nick Finzer](#)—makes big strides towards the limelight on her Posi-Tone Records debut as leader with the restorative and percolating *Winds of Change*.



Over the last couple of years, Tarantino has been the much-talked-about spotlight of such outstanding Posi-Tone ensemble discs as this year's *Pride and Joy* by Lioness, *Maximum Enjoyment* by [Something Blue](#) and 2018's *Bliss* by baritone saxophonist [Lauren Seavian](#). Here she begins the proceedings slowly and quietly with "Wisp After Wisp." An elegiac Sands solo opens up into an introspective, bluesy solo by Tarantino as Royston and Martin sympathetically flourish behind her. The jumpy and nervy "Face Value" follows, the horns in swinging tandem until Finzer breaks loose, bringing all the growl and funk he can muster, calling out both Sands and Tarantino to get down and mix it up with him, which both do with plenty of verve and vitality.

Royston takes centerstage on [Noriko Ueda](#)'s whiplash "See Saw," a winsome quirky adventure written for the high voltage hi-jinks of [The DIVA Jazz Orchestra](#), that features Tarantino on soprano sax, an instrument she is more than comfortable with. Royston and Tarantino trade off with an uncomplicated ease while Sands comps merrily away. "Breeze" pairs Sands and Tarantino perfectly, each pushing the other, sailing brightly along.

What she readily admits was her first ever composition, the shuffling, bossa-tinged "Square One," again teams Sands and Tarantino so easily, so artfully and tunefully that you wish the song never ended. "Calm" is a marvel of give-and-take, as Finzer again proves foil and muse for Tarantino's liquid lines. Bassist Martin gets his moment in the sun on "Undercurrent," pulling the collective along with him while "Ready or Not" packs so much punch into its manic three-minutes-and-fifty-eight-seconds that you are ready to catch your breath with the beautiful closing ballad, "Without."

Track Listing: Wisp After Wisp; Face Value; Seesaw; Breeze; Zingaro; Square One; Calm; Undercurrent; Ready or Not; Without.

Personnel: Alexa Tarantino: woodwinds; Christain Sands: piano; Joe Martin: bass; Rudy Royston: drums; Nick Finzer: trombone.

Title: [Winds of Change](#) | Year Released: 2019 | Record Label: Posi-Tone



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