

## Alexa Tarantino: Firefly



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The twenty-first century sees many of us talking to a cloud-based artificial intelligence: "Alexa, play my music." And so she does. The time frame also sees the emergence of a talented human Alexa—Alexa Tarantino, who plays *her* music, on *Firefly*, the woodwindist's third album release on Posi- Tone Records, an evolutionary leap forward—conceptually and compositionally—from her debut, *Winds of Change* (2019), and her second outing, *Clarity* (2020), both on Posi-Tone Records.



Fronting a quintet which includes vibraphonist and label mate [Behn Gillece](#) and keyboardist [Art Hirahara](#), Tarantino, plays alto and soprano saxophones, flute and clarinet, making a music which has a feeling of a release of positivity, of pent-up feelings and ideas being given voice with the easing of a post-pandemic isolation. The disc opens with Hirahara's "Spider's Dance," a luminescent reverie, with the leader sounding particularly inspired. The arrangement—the back and forth of piano, vibes and saxophone solos—is as close to perfection as can be. Vibraphonist Gillece's "Mindful Moments" finds Tarantino switching to flute, floating over the rhythm section's fluid shuffle, leading into a composition from the group's drummer, Rudy Royston, "Move The Spirit," a high octane, get-up-and-dance type of tune..

With "Iris," a tune written by saxophonist [Wayne Shorter](#)—which appeared on [Miles Davis'](#) *ESP* (Columbia Records, 1965)—the ensemble explores Shorter's classic sound, edgy and luxuriant at the same time in this quintet's rendition.

All great music, but it is with her own "Daybreak" that Tarantino's evolutionary progression begins to show. The tune serves as Part 1 of her original "A Moment In Time" suite. It has a "clean slate, go out and make the day" sound, brimming with energy and optimism," moving into the minute-and-a-half "Surge Fughetta" from bassist [Boris Kozlov](#)'s pen. The tune has a dreamy, chamber music vibe (flute, vibes and bass), which segues into Tarantino's "Surge Capacity," a scintillating barnburner, with Tarantino's blowing bringing alto saxophonist [Jackie McLean](#) to mind.

Tarantino and the group re-visit Wayne Shorter with "Lady Day," a lovely, introspective, time-stands-still six and half minutes.

This excellent set closes with the highlight, Tarantino's "The Firefly Code," which, on an Alexa mix (the artificial intelligence Alexa, not the saxophonist Alexa) could be mistaken for a Hubert Laws composition—intricately and ethereally beautiful, exuding "hope, faith, rest and rejuvenation," as only the best music can.



## Track Listing

Spider's Dance; Mindful Moments; Move Of The Spirit; Iris; Daybreak; Surge Fughetta; Surge Capacity; La Donna Nel Giardino; Rootless Ruthlessness; Lady Day; Vilet Sky; The Firefly Code.

## Personnel

[Alexa Tarantino](#): saxophone, alto; [Behn Gillece](#): vibraphone; [Art Hirahara](#): piano; [Boris Koslov](#): bass; [Rudy Royston](#): drums.

### Additional Instrumentation

Alexa Tarantino: alto saxophone, soprano saxophone, flute, alto flute, clarinet.

## Album Information

Title: [Firefly](#) | Year Released: 2021 | Record Label: [Posi-Tone Records](#)