

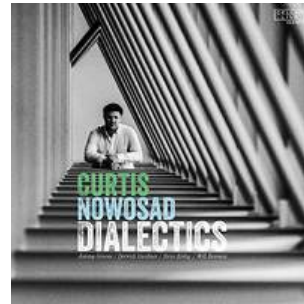
# Curtis Nowosad: Dialectics



By **DAN BILAWSKY**  
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While it may be tempting to simply call *Dialectics* a straight-ahead session, Kevin Sun's liner notes set the record straight: According to Sun, "neo-hard bop" is a more accurate term for this music. What's most important to note, however, is that the music is pretty irresistible, regardless of what you call it.



On the sophomore album from Curtis Nowosad, the drummer delivers an invigorating program of music with a killer quintet born out of the Winnipeg native's time spent studying at the University of Manitoba. This group got together regularly over a three year period starting in 2009, when saxophonist [Jimmy Greene](#) was still teaching at that institution. Nowosad is now a New Yorker and, as many know, Greene left The University of Manitoba to move to Connecticut, but this band didn't run out of steam because of those moves: Nowosad's group recently toured Canada sans Greene, and the whole band got together in Winnipeg in June of 2014 to record this album.

The nine numbers on *Dialectics* seem to fly by. Tight arrangements, thrilling solos, and memorable melodies all help to make for a pleasant listening experience. Nowosad demonstrates his compositional skills, arranging savvy, and drumming acumen throughout. There's a high-energy, rhythmically-revised take on a [Wayne Shorter](#) classic ("Speak No Evil"); an original blues that sounds like it could've been in [Art Blakey's](#) book ("A Casual Test"); an Afro-Cuban twist on a [Thelonious Monk](#) number ("Bye-Ya"), influenced by Nowosad's studies with [Bobby Sanabria](#) at the Manhattan School of Music; and a funky number that gives Nowosad, Greene, and trumpeter [Derrick Gardner](#) some space to blow ("Dialectics"). Nowosad also delivers the requisite ballad ("Reconciliation"), voiced through the horns and guided by pianist [Will Bonness](#), and the expected waltz ("Gleaning & Dreaming"), though it departs from expectations by vacillating between three and five.

Nowosad, Greene, Gardner, Bonness, and bassist Steve Kirby have a good thing going here. These men have real musical chemistry, not the fabricated camaraderie that comes with so many jazz releases today. While it will likely be difficult for Nowosad to keep this group going, here's to hoping that he does.

Track Listing: Speak No Evil; Empirically Speaking; Dialectics; 159 & St. Nick; A Casual Test; Reconciliation; Bye-Ya; Gleaning & Dreaming; I Remember You.

Personnel: Curtis Nowosad: drums; Jimmy Greene: tenor saxophone, soprano saxophone; Derrick Gardner: trumpet; Steve Kirby: acoustic bass; Will Bonness: piano.

Year Released: 2015 | Record Label: [Cellar Live](#) | Style: [Straight-ahead/Mainstream](#)