

UNDERSTORY

Ben Wendel Live At The Village Vanguard

NEW RELEASE
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File Under: Jazz

GRAMMY nominated saxophonist **Ben Wendel**'s highly anticipated new live album is ***Understory: Live at the Village Vanguard***. Recorded during a series of intimate performances at the storied venue in November 2022, *Understory* captures the quintessential essence of Wendel's artistry and the iconic atmosphere of the Village Vanguard, one of jazz's most hallowed stages.

Recording live at the Village Vanguard is a significant milestone in any jazz musician's career. For Wendel, it prompted a moment of reflection and a chance to evaluate his journey as both a composer and instrumentalist. Known for his expansive approach to jazz, Wendel's work often extends beyond traditional boundaries, incorporating diverse influences and experimental elements. "I've always had a broad curiosity about music," Wendel says, acknowledging his mother's influence as a successful opera singer. "I love exploring sounds from different genres and cultures. My work isn't confined to any one style or tradition."

Understory is a testament to Wendel's collaborative spirit. The album features his quartet, comprising long-standing associates

in **Clayton, Oh**, and **Calvaire**. Their shared history and mutual understanding allow for a dynamic and nuanced interplay that enhances the compositional depth of Wendel's music. The album includes original compositions crafted specifically for this engagement, such as "Lu," which challenges the musicians with its complex metric structures. Other tracks, like "Tao," delve into contemplative moods, reflecting Wendel's ability to push boundaries while maintaining a connection to jazz's core traditions. Wendel also pays homage to jazz history with tracks like "Proof," a contrafact of Thelonious Monk's "Evidence," and a rendition of "On the Trail," famously recorded by Jimmy Heath and Wynton Kelly. These pieces showcase Wendel's technical prowess and his deep appreciation for jazz's rich heritage.

The creative process behind *Understory* involved not only the exploration of new musical territories but also a commitment to authenticity. Wendel's approach emphasizes allowing the musicians to be themselves within the framework of his compositions. "If I did my job right," he explains, "the musicians don't have to go against their nature. They play as themselves within the structure of the music, and that's beautiful."

Ben Wendel
SAXOPHONE, EFFECTS
Gerald Clayton
PIANO
Linda May Han Oh
BASS, VOCALS
Obed Calvaire
DRUMS

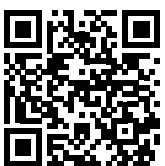


1	Lu	10:25
2	Proof	11:01
3	On the Trail	9:56
4	Scosh	10:27
5	Jean & Renata	7:54
6	I Saw You Say	8:00
7	Tao	8:17

All compositions by Ben Wendel (Wendel Music, ASCAP), except "On the Trail" by Ferde Grofé, arrangement by Ben Wendel

Recorded live at the Village Vanguard, November 4-6, 2022.

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