



ULYSSES OWENS JR.

Review

Birmingham Times, Esther Callens

“ All the tunes on *Onward & Upward* validates that Ulysses Owens is a rare marvel – whether he is performing or composing.”

All About Jazz

“ There is a lot of love here (*Onward & Upward*), and a lot of players to appreciate, but Owens owns this one. It is all about the grooves, good vibes, and a winning attitude.”

The New York Times, Nate Chinen

“ Mr. Owens draws an immediate focus on the functioning of his instrument, as if issuing an urgent bulletin.”

Jazz Times, Lloyd Sachs

“ A collection of relaxed-in-the-groove number including three pop-soul covers, *Onward and Upward* invests heavily in airy melodies even as Owens asserts himself rhythmically.”

Ottawa Citizen - Jazzblog.CA, Peter Hum

“With music this assured and expansive, Owens’ CD leaves me hungry to hear much more from the drummer. If you polled my fellow jazz writers who gravitate to jazz’s modern mainstream, I wouldn’t be surprised if you find the like-minded enthusiasm for Owens would be ... unanimous.”

Jazz In Space, Nick Bewsey

“... the music on “Unanimous” sounds and feels good, qualities that guarantee repeat listening. Owens is a marvelous drummer with the wisdom to keep the music flowing – he’s got no time for extended head-rattling solos here – and it’s a credit to his reputation that he’s got friends like Payton, McBride and the others on board, making his debut a spirited and welcome hang.”

Critical Jazz, Brent Black

“Ulysses Owens Jr. is one of the handful of legitimate jazz triple threats working the scene today. As a performer, producer and educator you would be hard pressed to name another drummer whose talents could be on par with with Owens. Oh...and did I mention he is a Grammy winner as well? Ulysses Owens Jr. is indeed the real deal.”

“*Unanimous* is the most recent offering from Owens and is easily one of the years finest releases for a plethora of reasons.”

“5 Stars and one of the sleepers of the year!”

Jazz In Space, Nick Bewsey

“Overall, the music on “Unanimous” sounds and feels good, qualities that guarantee repeat listening. Owens is a marvelous drummer with the wisdom to keep the music flowing.”

The Urban Flux, Rob Young

“Still on the shy side of 30, Ulysses Owens Jr. has garnered an international reputation as drummer of choice for Christian McBride, Nicholas Payton, and Kurt Elling, three very different personalities who are very particular in what they want to hear from the kit. On his Criss Cross leader debut *Unanimous*, Owens Jr. convenes McBride and Payton, as well as pianist Christian Sands (even more visible for his work in McBride’s year-old-trio), rising star alto saxophonist Jaleel Shaw (Roy Haynes’ main sax voice for the last five years), and trombonist Mike Dease. The leader finds fresh approaches to various flavors of the swing timeline – Art Blakey and the refraction’s of Buhaina established by Mulgrew Miller and Bobby Watson (each a one-time employer); Tony Williams’ two phases with the Miles Davis Quintet; Ed Thigpen’s crispness with the Oscar Peterson Trio – within a 21st century context.”

WRTI

"I really like the track *Beardom X*, a perceived conversation between Malcolm X and Romare Bearden. *Unanimous* offers a nice mixture of original compositions and tasteful interpretations of jazz classics."

Derrick Lucas

"*Unanimous* is #1 at WGMC Rochester: As Far As I am concerned, it's the best jazz album of 2012."

WRRG Chicago, IL - Tom Macek

"Never overpowering, the perfect complement to his team, solos like he means business, and always swinging, Ulysses Owens is keeping the tradition of the drummer in jazz alive and well as evidenced by his latest CD *Unanimous*. Listen, feel the beat, and try to keep from finger snapping and/or toe-tapping. A great disc, showcasing a jazz drummer deserving of all accolades that come his way."

O's Place Magazine - D. Oscar Groomes

“Drummer Ulysses Owens is the master behind the U. O. Project. He leads a fine band and also composed four of the seven compositions. Owens lays down some funky beats for these jazzy selections. They start with "N'Awlins Greens" interlacing the D.E.A. Horns and Tim Green (sax) with Sullivan Foster on the B3. "Cyclic Episode" is more of a neobop tune with Foster switching to the piano. Alicia Olatuja sings with passionate soul on "Stop This Train" before they swing hard on "The Maestro Blues" with strong solos from Ben Williams and Owens. They wrap up the set with "Sing" a spiritual ballad featuring lead vocals by Nicholas Ryan Gant. It is a well-balanced album.”

This Is Book's Music

“Owens is a drummer, and a damn good one at that. The kind of jazz he plays as part of his Project is the kind of jazz I enjoy listening to a lot, whether it’s bebop, hard bop, funky jazz but not too much, he knows how to play the drums like someone trying to crack open a safe. He knows how to do all the right things at the right times, hold himself back and gently decorate the music, and then just play not only as the leader, but as a team member. As the title says, it is indeed ... *Time For U*, but are you ready for U? Make yourself ready.”

Jazz Times - Susan Francis

“Drummer Ulysses Owens, Jr. reveals that he had one goal in mind when he created his debut album *It’s Time For U* as he claims in a recent press release, “I want to bring music back to its original purpose and that’s for people to escape through the music, and have inspiration to approach life with more vigor and purpose.”

“Using every square inch of the chord progressions creatively, Owens keeps the gist of the album upbeat, and forges through impasses and rough patches in the fluidity of the music so the harmonic formations roll smoothly. The horns and keyboards operate the gear shift of Owens vessel, but he controls the paddling and the pace of the tracks mobility. A graduate of New York City’s Juilliard School, Owens’ ambitions are simple in comparison to his peers, to play music that he loves and to be loved in return for it. It is the stuff that indelible musicians are made of, and remembered for through time.”

Midwest Record - Chris Spector, editor and publisher

“Ok, contemporary jazzbos, it’s time to step up. This young brother has chops to spare and is going to be one of the mainstay jazz drummers of tomorrow and the future. Having learned his lessons well from Blue Note, Verve and Impulse, he knows how to get a groove going with the finesse and style of Art Taylor while adding his own spice throughout. A zesty debut from a well seasoned player that is one day going to look back at this date and think it was recorded by The Flintstones. Mark my words and pay attention, this is the real deal.”

Roanoke Times Newspaper - Tad Dickens

“It started from show opener "Brother Mister," its slinky, soul-jazz melody driven by drummer Ulysses Owens Jr.'s quarter-note pulse. Hampton native Steve Wilson's saxophone runs strode and glided along a skipping 16th-note path, with pianist Peter Martin underpinning it with stabbing complementary chords.”

Christian McBride

"The hungry young understudy. Man, I'm so in love with this cat. He is serious. He soaks up information quicker than a google search. A very well-spoken, well-studied young brother, and extremely soulful to boot. As a drummer, he just put it in the pocket. A very difficult concept for some young drummers to grasp, but not Ulysses. He let the music come to him. He didn't try to force anything. That's an extreme rarity for drummers of ANY age! I predict Ulysses is going to be one of the next major cats"

Jazzscene - George Fen

“A program of all original soul-jazz under the leadership of the drummer Ulysses Owens Jr. Therein lies the 'UO.' With the inclusion of Hammond B-3 and some earthy vocals in the soul genre, you’ll find "The Maestro Blues" to be invigorating and straight ahead. For fans of the r&b-soul, this is better than most I’ve heard.”

Jazz Times May Issue

“The performance was inspiring. The smiles Elling's crew had on their faces the whole time spoke volumes. Ulysses Owens, Jr. has a ridiculously infectious smile, not to mention awesome skills on the drums. The hushed banter between one another just barely audible made me feel like part of the production as I wondered who was having more fun - me, or the band.”

John Shand - Highlights of 2010's Jazz in Sydney

“Kurt Elling brought an outstanding band, including the brilliant pianist Laurence Hobgood. The singer struck a rare accord between heart, head and showbiz slickness. His young drummer, Ulysses Owens, displayed superb touch and flair, one brushes solo being so light it was as though little wings were beating against the skins.”

Tad Dickens

“It started from show opener “Brother Mister,” its slinky, soul-jazz melody driven by drummer Ulysses Owens Jr.’s quarter-note pulse. Hampton native Steve Wilson’s saxophone runs strode and glided along a skipping 16th-note path, with pianist Peter Martin underpinning it with stabbing complementary chords.”

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