

Rob Mullins Best Of The Trio



REVIEW by SCOTT YANOW LA Jazz Scene August 2024

Rob Mullins has been a **major pianist for the past 40 years**, recording dozens of albums as a leader since 1981, excelling in both the straight ahead and pop/jazz fields, and participating in extensive work as a studio musician. He has long had his own sound on keyboards and has been a longtime member of Hubert Laws' bands.

For those who enjoy Mullins' straight ahead playing, **Best Of The Trio is a must**. He is heard on acoustic piano performing with six different trios. Chronologically it begins with a soulful rendition of "Georgia On My Mind" from 1988 with bassist Marty Ruddy and drummer Larry Thompson from the album *5th Gear*. Four songs, including "Body And Soul" and "The Song Is You," are from 1989's *Jazz Jazz* and team Mullins with the remarkable bassist **Brian Bromberg (who has a few dazzling solos)** and drummer Joel Taylor.

2006's *Standards And More* with bassist David Levray and drummer Evan Stone is represented by a **spectacular version of "Fur Elise."** That Beethoven melody might be played by every beginning piano student but certainly not this way! The trio of Mullins, bassist Max Benson and drummer Evan Stone dig into a spirited version of "Over The Rainbow" from the 2017 album of the same name. Seven songs, including "Moonlight In Vermont," "Sleigh Ride," and "Stompin' At

The Savoy,” are from 2018’s The Nearness Of You with bassist **Will Lyle** and drummer Nikko Salvadore. And finally there are two previously unreleased numbers (“Cha Cha Cha!” and “Riders Of The Storm”) from 2021 with bassist Jonathan Kirsch and drummer Nathan Douglas.

Despite spanning 33 years, **The Best Of The Trio has a strong unity** that is bolstered by the fact that Rob Mullins has been a brilliant player and has had his own sound since at least the late 1980s. Even the most familiar songs are given creative twists and turns. This CD is easily recommended and available online.

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