

Leigh Pilzer

Growing up, Leigh Pilzer planned on a career as a cellist. By the time she graduated high school, however, she had fallen under the spell of jazz through the music of icons like Lester Young, Dexter Gordon, and Count Basie. She switched from cello to saxophone, starting on alto but soon finding her true voice on baritone.

After earning a bachelor's degree in Jazz Composition and Arranging from Berklee Leigh returned to her native Washington, DC where she is an in-demand freelancer. She also co-leads the Jen Krupa-Leigh Pilzer Quintet and is a member of the Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra, The DIVA Jazz Orchestra, and the Bohemian Caverns Jazz Orchestra.

She has appeared at DC's top jazz venues including: Blues Alley, Twins Jazz, Jazz Night in Southwest, the Kennedy Center, and the Atlas Performing Arts Center, performing with her own group as well as with SJMO, the Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Quintet, BCJO, and many others.

National and international appearances with SJMO and DIVA include Manchester Craftsmen's Guild, the Hollywood Bowl, Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola at Jazz at Lincoln Center, and concerts in Canada, Croatia, Egypt, England, France, Germany, and Russia. Leigh plays on DIVA's last five CDs and contributed arrangements to the two most recent: *A Swingin' Life* (2014) and *Special Kay* (2016). She wrote the orchestrations for the nine-piece version of DIVA featured in the critically acclaimed show *Maurice Hines is Tappin' Thru Life* and has played the show in DC, Cleveland, New York, and Philadelphia.

Along with performing, Leigh has continued her academic career. She earned master's degrees in Jazz Studies and Saxophone Performance at the University of Maryland and completed several years in the PhD program at The Catholic University of America as a music theory major. She transferred from CUA to George Mason University, where she is currently working toward a Doctor of Musical Arts in Saxophone Performance with a jazz emphasis and is the recipient of the merit-based Presidential Scholarship. She has served on the faculties of University of Maryland and Towson University, teaching Jazz Theory and Jazz Arranging at UM and Jazz History at both institutions.





Strunkin' is baritone saxophonist Leigh Pilzer's first recording as a bandleader. She is joined by long-time friends and colleagues from The DIVA Jazz Orchestra, the Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra, and the critically acclaimed show *Maurice Hines is Tappin' Thru Life*: Jen Krupa on trombone, Sherrie Maricle on drums, Amy Shook on bass, and Jackie Warren on piano.

The musicians' shared love and respect for straight-ahead, swinging jazz is evident throughout the CD—six original compositions by Leigh and one each by Amy and Jen—starting with the Konitz-inspired title track and continuing with the Ellingtonesque “Miss Ally in Allyworld,” the blues-drenched sass of Amy’s “Brag Time,” the reimagined bebop of Jen’s “Duel at Dawn,” and more.

Strunkin' was recorded live at the 6th Annual Washington Women in Jazz Festival by Grammy-winning engineer Charlie Pilzer at Allyworld, the dual-purpose performance/tracking space at Airshow in Takoma Park, MD.

Leigh Pilzer, baritone saxophone (Lee Pill-zer)
Jen Krupa, trombone
Sherrie Maricle, drums
Amy Shook, bass
Jackie Warren, piano

1. Strunkin' 9:55
2. Blue Moo 11:29
3. Miss Ally in Allyworld 6:11
4. Brag Time 10:33
5. Thaddish 5:30
6. It's Anyone But You 8:09
7. Look Before You Lerp 5:37
8. Duel at Dawn 5:34

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