

Travis Wesley

Bio & Press Highlights

"While Travis Wesley's playing on 2012's Natural Diversion showed his roots, Cycle By Three displays his individuality and creativity. This colorful and inventive set points the way towards the piano trio of the future." -Scott Yanow,

"Travis & Toby Curtright have written some wonderfully original music. Together with Tom Marko, this trio is simply amazing. Cycle By Three is a record that I continue to listen to over & over again. I'm sure you will do the same." -Bill Duncan, Owner/Operator Cedar Hills Sound, Peoria, IL.

"The whole album is marvelously produced, with a sustained reflective mood. On Cycle By Three, each track is a standout that holds tight to the thread that joins the songs together." -Laura Kennedy (WGLT 89.1fm)

"Wow! I love this CD! I found it deep, profound, passionate - hitting a wide range of emotions throughout the cycle. Wesley's compositions are intense, hitting a deep emotion that feels good to be found. These works are complex yet accessible." Fan Review, CDBABY.com

A fixture in the Midwest where his trio appears regularly, pianist Travis Wesley is heard at his best on his new album, *Cycle By Three*. While Travis Wesley's previous CD, *Natural Diversion* paid tribute to such pianists as Red Garland, Wynton Kelly, Erroll Garner and Ahmad Jamal, *Cycle By Three* is a giant step forward. His playing is strikingly original while his interplay with bassist Toby Curtright and drummer Tom Marko throughout a program of colorful originals is consistently impressive.

Travis Wesley was born and raised in Bloomington, Illinois. "I was 10 or 11 when I started taking formal piano lessons," remembers Travis. "At the time I played Chopin, Bach, Bartok, Mozart and much of the traditional piano repertoire. I discovered jazz through my piano teacher. She exposed me to some swing, ragtime and boogie-woogie tunes when I was 12. That led me to exploring other eras of jazz piano."

After graduating from high school, Travis attended the Berklee College of Music for a year, working at his first professional gigs while a student. Moving back to Central Illinois, he led a quartet of his own and played regularly in clubs for several years while attending Eastern Illinois University. He earned a Bachelors degree in music with a jazz studies emphasis, became a teaching assistant in the jazz studies department, and in 2005 completed his Masters degree. Travis is also in the process of completing his doctorate degree in jazz piano

performance from the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, with a minor in musicology and piano pedagogy. In May, 2013, he passed his preliminary exams and oral defense and is now ADB status (all but dissertation).



Wesley's recent trio release, *Cycle By Three* (August, 2013) featuring Toby Curtright on acoustic bass and Tom Marko on drums. Available on iTunes, CD Baby, Amazon & most other online retailers.

"One of my most important musical association as a sideman was playing with saxophonist Willie Akins in St. Louis during 2004-05. My wife and I moved to St. Louis where I worked with Willie in his quartet. It was a monumental experience for me. I learned a great deal about the music and also about the business from Willie. I had the opportunity to play with high-level players in his group, and also worked with other excellent musicians in the St. Louis area. I also led my own trio. During my last year of my Masters degree, I commuted between Charleston, Illinois

and St. Louis, a two hour drive several nights a week to work with Willie and his quartet, and it was a wonderful experience."

Travis Wesley, who has since moved back to Illinois, has worked in recent times with Kevin Hart, Matt Hughes, Frieda Lee, Jeff Helgesen, Darden Purcell, Shawn Purcell, Margaret Murphy, Ron Jones, Ben Wheeler, Tim Brickner, Chip McNeil, Jeff Magby, Cory Flanigan, Andy Crawford, Tom Marko, Jay Sawyer, Frank Parker and Carlos Vega. He has led trios for 15 years in addition to recording two, recent albums, *Natural Diversion* (2012) and most recently, *Cycle By Three* (2013).

Wesley is a music instructor at Heartland Community College in Normal, IL, and maintains a private piano studio. He is an active educator and clinician throughout the Midwest. Travis is also a musicologist and music journalist who writes about various topics on American music at his blog at traviswesleyjazz.com. He demonstrates on his new record, *Cycle By Three* and during his many engagements with his trio, that he is one of the most promising and progressive jazz talents to be found in the Midwest, a pianist whose music is always worth hearing.

Bio by Jazz Author & Historian, Scott Yanow

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