



## Spotlight on Arizona Artists

### [Review: Jazz Pianist & Composer Beth Lederman's "Las Sombras"](#)

By Kyle Harris

Any recording is a marker of the artist's vision at a point in time and **Beth Lederman** is at a very good place in the arc of her career. Her latest release "**Las Sombras**" is a noteworthy landmark in her career as a jazz pianist and composer. "Las Sombras" offers an intimate perspective of the music Lederman is most committed to; traditional jazz, Latin and Brazilian styles, original compositions, and re-harmonizing traditional melodies.

Lederman has earned genuine respect in her native Arizona and beyond for her unflinching commitment not only to musical excellence, but also to balancing her other equally important roles as a mother, teacher and wife. "Las Sombras" is a testament to her years of learning, practice and sacrifice condensed into 53 minutes of thoughtful jazz performance.

On "Las Sombras", an original composition, Lederman clearly and convincingly demonstrates she has a pianistic "voice". "But Not For Me" and "Things Ain't What They Used To Be" pay homage to Gershwin and Ellington, showing respect and her ability to interpret these classic charts with a fresh reading. Her original composition "Las Sombras", as well as "Nature Boy", and Djavan's "[Flor De Lis](#)", are sung wonderfully by Kay Peper, highlighting Lederman's Latin and Brazilian sensibilities and technique." Everything Must Change" by Bernard Ighner features a supportive, yet insightful arrangement that gives chanteuse Sherry Roberson all the space required to focus the listener on the lyrics.

"[Scarborough Fair](#)" and Joni Mitchell's "Both Sides Now" are standouts in that these two selections vividly illuminate Lederman's ability to bring a bright creative vision to this recording. "Scarborough Fair" introduces Indian tablas over an intriguing re-harmonization of the melody. Mary Petrich plays innovative soprano sax lines that evoke a touch of mystery. "Both Sides Now" is a highlight as the only solo performance. Lederman's interpretation of this famous tune is, in the best sense of the word, elegant.

"Supai Waltz" is the other original composition on this recording. It is a well-conceived piece executed in the traditional trio format. Lederman's deep, lifelong love of the Southwest can be heard in the subtext of this performance. "Lead The Way" written and sung by jazz guitarist and educator Pete Pancrazi brings out Lederman's formidable jazz organ chops with a contemporary urgency punctuated by Mike Ozuna's incisive rhythm guitar.

Any review of a recording is, for better or worse, an exercise in comparisons. This can be severely limiting and risk entirely missing the music itself. "Las Sombras" is a record that is best understood by listening rather than analysis. And "Las Sombras" features a wonderful collaboration of talented performers. **Mike Crotty, Felix Sainz, Todd Chuba, Emerson Laffey, Joe Garcia, Mary Petrich, Sherry Roberson, Kay Peper, Pete Pancrazi, Mike King, Paul Anderson and Jerry Donato** all gave unselfishly of their talent in support of Lederman's music and creative vision. Every track shows real passion. This is a fine recording that stands on its own merits, no comparisons required.

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