



# JAZZ AD NETWORK



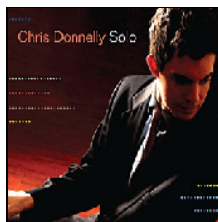
Review Courtesy [AllAboutJazz.com](http://AllAboutJazz.com)

## Solo

Chris Donnelly | Alma Records

By [Raul d'Gama Rose](#)

Here's what you might do with *this* brand new record: have someone place a velvet blindfold over your eyes, slip the record into a CD player, hit "play," adjust volume for comfort, then slide into a very comfortable chair and listen. Chances are one may be think that Bill Evans had come back to life and was playing a brand new version of "Very Early." Now, do not open your eyes yet--listen on. As the first track ends and "For the Drifters" begins, chances are you may believe that one is at a recital by Friedrich Gulda or Gabriel&#233;--maybe even Egberto Gismonti. But, of course, you aren't. You are actually listening to *Solo*, the debut record by one of Canada's best-kept secrets: Chris Donnelly. There is no other way to describe the first experience or, in fact, the emotions that run through one's body with subsequent hearings of Donnelly's brilliant first offering.



Chris Donnelly is a pianist of unbridled talent, sublime technique and an impulse to adorn the sound of music. As an artist he appears to believe that the art of the solo piano is his true calling. Although he has played live in a number of settings--performing with a wide group of busy elder performing statesmen on Canada's jazz scenes--he has managed to stay focused on his holy grail: solo piano. The result is this fine and memorable record featuring seven brilliantly original compositions and four utterly original interpretations of classic songs by legendary jazz musicians--from the playful "Donna Lee - Variations" by Charlie Parker, to the majestic "Hallucinations," from the mercurial pen of Earl "Bud" Powell; from the Bill Evans' classic "Very Early" to the "Cinderella Medley - So This Is Love/A Dream Is A Wish Your Heart Makes," from the pens of Hoffman, David and Livingston.

The music on this record also comprises Donnelly's own compositions. "For the Drifters" is a truly accomplished song, worthy of the pen of the great Walter Norris, while songs such as "Serenity" and "Winter's Waltz" are studies in controlled virtuosity. Perhaps the most memorable music of the set could well be the musical sketches that pay oblique musical tribute to modern composers and the love of his life. Two of these, were written with Erik Satie and Gabriel Faure; in mind. The third was created to reflect a space within the heart and for Donnelly's wife, who is also an opera singer. These three "Songs in B Minor" stand apart in the brilliance of their moody tonality and their melodic invention.

In many respects this hardly sounds like a first album, because Chris Donnelly's genius lies in his sophisticated maturity. Then there is the small matter of his superior technique, virtuosity and exceptional improvisational skills--all of these well beyond his years. It appears that Chris Donnelly can only be destined for the stellar regions of the world of music in general, and jazz in particular.

**Track Listing:** Very Early; For the Drifters, Song in B Minor - Eva;

Hallucinations; Cinderella Medley - So This Is Love/A Dream Is A Wish  
Your Heart Makes; Donna Lee (Variations); Song in B Minor - Satie;  
Serenity; Winter's Waltz; Song in B Minor - Faure; Overtime (Extended  
Pay).

**Personnel:** Chris Donnelly; piano.

[CD Review Center](#) | [Upcoming Release Center](#)

---

Click the BACK button to return to the previous page.

All material copyright © 2008 All About Jazz and contributing writers. All rights reserved.