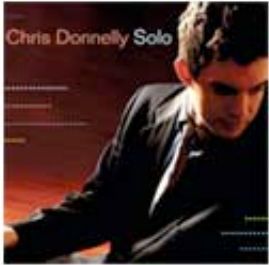


« [Mooredale Concerts Kuerti & Kuerti reviewed by Stanley Fefferman](#)

## [Chris Donnelly debut CD, SOLO, reviewed by Stanley Fefferman](#)

Chris Donnelly, *SOLO*, 11 songs, 67', Alma Records, 2008. ACD92382.



To be frank, I have not cared to hear much jazz piano lately: I have been up to my ears in classical piano, particularly Marc-André Hamelin's take on Haydn's Piano Sonatas. So when Jane gave me Chris Donnelly's debut album *Solo*, I heard the first cut—Bill Evans' tune "Very Early"—as nothing more than sweet and low cocktail/dinner piano music. Very nice, but so what? I kept listening.

He developed the next chorus with a touch of swing. In the next chorus, Donnelly came in swinging a bit harder on an angle of discord, and in the next stepped into some surprising chord and tempo shifts. That's when I started hearing Haydn, the master of surprise. It's a fact that for a time Bill Evans "worked on Bach, Haydn, Beethoven, Dvorak and Mozart, for "three hours a day," so I wasn't just hearing things.

Donnelly also has a thorough classical background. Like Haydn, Donnelly puts something new into every variation of this 5'17" second tune, and if you think that is solely due to Evans and not Donnelly, just keep listening to the other half a dozen Donnelly tunes on this album, and you will get it.

The album has three Donnelly originals entitled "Song in B Minor", two of them homages to classical composers Satie and Fauré. Each is recognizably in the style of the composer, and both show the taste and wit of Donnelly as he modulates from classical to jazz feeling. Comes to jazz feeling, he works skillfully off two other great jazz masters, Bud Powell ("Hallucinations"), and Charlie Parker ("Donna Lee"). Both cuts show impressive keyboard chops as well as startling improvisational talent.

The Powell and Parker tunes are totally progressive and hip, not to say a little weird. In a cool show of class, Donnelly dares to go Disney and offers a "Cinderella Medley – "So This is Love/ A Dream is a Wish Your Heart Makes." So pretty you want to believe it, and still very compelling jazz.

Smart, beautiful, and funny: a great listening date.

[Chris Donnelly, SOLO, 11 songs, 67', Alma Records, 2008. ACD92382.](#)

This entry was posted on Wednesday, January 14th, 2009 at 2:00 pm and is filed under [Reviews](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#) feed. Both comments and pings are currently closed.

Comments are closed.

is proudly powered by [WordPress](#)  
[Entries \(RSS\)](#) and [Comments \(RSS\)](#).