

# CHRISTOPHER BURNETT

## The Standards, Vol. 2

*Live at The Drum Room in Kansas City*  
featuring **Mike Pagan + James Ward + Michael Shanks**





## LINER NOTES

### ABOUT THE RESIDENCY

The **Christopher Burnett “Drum Room” Quartet** was a featured performer on the First Saturdays of the month beginning shortly after the newly renovated hotel and jazz venue opened at 14th and Baltimore in downtown Kansas City. I played these dates with a core group of various artists like Will Matthews, James Ward, Roger Wilder, William Crain, Dr. Mike Pagan, Michael Shanks, Jeff Harshbarger, Craig Aiken, and Brandon Draper, among several other top professional players on the scene.

Our two-year residency was during the years of 2006 - 2007. We played “standards” that I liked but were not the typical tunes everyone played at the jam sessions in town. This was my first steady gig as a leader on the Kansas City jazz scene.

These seven tracks were recorded live direct to digital by long time friend Willie Thornton on one of those Saturday evenings in 2007. Thornton brought his professional remote studio out several times and set it up in the venue. He then sent me the audio masters and those are what make up **“The Standards, Vol. 2.”**

**The Drum Room** is the only historically significant Kansas City jazz venue that is actually still located in its original place within the famous (Hilton) President Hotel but as of this writing, it no longer schedules live jazz music.

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Photograph by Jerry Lockett

### ABOUT COMING HOME

This was also my first “leader gig” after coming back home to the Kansas City metropolitan area to live permanently in 2001. I had finished successfully serving for over 22 years with professional military music organizations in 1996. So, I could play.

Over those next five years my wife, **Terri Anderson Burnett** and I opened then subsequently closed a retail music store, almost immediately became empty nesters as parents (and grandparents), and subsequently moved back to my home of the Kansas City metropolitan area to focus on music while rebuilding our life together.

My days typically consisted of practicing at least 4 hours per day, composing and arranging music, teaching a private studio of 30-40 woodwind students, and going to jam sessions in Kansas City to get to know musicians and the layout of the scene. I let my hair grow really long. I did all of that for the first ten years we were back home before taking a position with the American Jazz Museum in August of 2011.

I also started taking weekly lessons with **Ahmed Alaadeen** every Wednesday at his home in Overland Park during this period. At age 45, I wanted to find a jazz master on the Kansas City scene who could teach me the history and mentor me musically as well. I made an appointment to see if Mr. Alaadeen would take me on as a student.

He wanted me to bring any recordings that I had and any music that I was currently working on to the first meeting, then we’d go from there if he accepted me as a student. Mr. Alaadeen listened to my recordings and had me play a few things for him, then he asked, “What do you want from me?” I was mature enough by that time to understand that he was basically seeing where my thought process was about learning. I answered, “Mr. Alaadeen, you can already hear what I don’t know, as I do with my own students. That’s why I am here seeking to study with you.”

We studied music together at his house from 2002 to early 2007. I learned lots.

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### ABOUT THE MUSIC

This set features three of my favorite Kansas City based musicians: **Dr. Mike Pagan** on piano; **James Ward** on acoustic bass; and, the drummer **Michael Shanks**. Brilliant musicians and artists. I would provide a set list and we would simply play the tunes. I wanted a freewheeling exchange among musicians in the quartet during our performances. We developed a following over those two years.

## LINER NOTES

In addition to the regular patrons dining and visiting the Drum Room, there was one couple in particular who would come each first Saturday just to hear us. You will hear the types of residuals that occur during live performances in this context. *Dishes clanging, conversations and laughter, feet tapping, and some applause.* The music selected for this release includes some of my favorite works by favorite composers.

**All The Things You Are** (By Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II) is the longest selection on this album and sets the tone in that we just start playing the tune and go from there spontaneously creating the arrangement as we perform it.

**Yesterdays** (By Otto Harbach, Ronen Shmueli and Jerome Kern) follows the same formula and shows the versatility of the quartet members as you hear Dr. Pagan bringing the B-3 organ vibe to this wonderful work which also features some fine solo work by Ward and Shanks.

**My One And Only Love** (By Guy Wood and Robert Mellin) is always dedicated to my wife, Terri Anderson Burnett whenever I have played it over the years.

**Triste** (By Antonio Carlos Jobim) is another masterpiece by Tom Jobim and although the Portuguese language title literally translates to “sad” in English, I have always felt some optimism within the melancholy lyrics and bluesy feel of the melody.

**Black Narcissus** (By Joe Henderson) is the first melody that I played upon the birth of our first born, our son Micah in Germany. I was overwhelmed with happiness and joy at being his father and meeting him. It's still among my favorite pieces and I have always loved the depth of Henderson's compositions.

**Invitation** (By Bronislau Kaper and Paul Francis Webster) begins cadenza-like before establishing the Latin groove that we maintain throughout. Among the aspects that I have come to appreciate about making music with these particular Kansas City jazz artists is they followed my lead in terms of style and concept, then embraced the approach to create some really fun performances during this residency. Our performance here reflects that collegiality and musical spirit.

**Nefertiti** (By Wayne Shorter) is a ballad that I have truly enjoyed since first hearing the composer perform it with Miles Davis. We improvise on the form here but the original version where they simply play the melody repeatedly is a tremendous statement about the depth and timelessness of this music.

I have continued to grow as a human being, musical artist, and composer since this music was played live and now released. The inherent energy and ancillary sounds from the live interaction of our music with the venue environment of The Drum Room from those years are an element that are not necessarily dated, but demonstrate the contemporary nature and regenerative properties this music retains. Standards are.



## LINER NOTES

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## ABOUT THE DRUM ROOM

It was the year 1941, the cost of a postage stamp was three cents, the President of the United States was Franklin D Roosevelt, and Pearl Harbor was attacked on the pre-dawn hours of December 7th. The hotel President which opened in 1927 opened the Drum Room.

Imagine looking across the room and seeing such entertainers as Frank Sinatra, Count Basie and Benny Goodman. You may have even seen people such as Charles Lindberg, Ben Siegel or Meyer Lansky.

The Drum Room included a bar in the shape of a drum, and a full service restaurant which featured some of the countries hottest touring musicians. It was the age of Cuban cool, a strong influence of Cuban society was sweeping its way across the country, it was Kansas City's place to see and be seen. According to a guest who visited the Drum Room in 1948 "it was just an exciting place to visit, it was the coolest place in town and everyone knew it".

The Drum Room restaurant and bar has re-opened and is part of the 45 million dollar renovation of the Hilton President Hotel. The menu again features a Cuban influence, and the atmosphere is just as cool as it was in 1941. Who knows you just might feel the spirits of the Rat Pack or Duke Ellington when you swing by.

(SOURCE: Archived DrumRoomKC.com)

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THE KANSAS CITY STAR | WWW.KANSASCITY.COM | THURSDAY, AUGUST 30, 2007 13

**Music & Nightlife**

**JAZZ TOWN | Chris Burnett Quintet at the Drum Room**

### AGE IS NO OBSTACLE FOR EMERGING JAZZMAN

**Chris Burnett, 51, is just starting to find his way into public jazz world.**

By JOE KLOPUS  
The Kansas City Star

One of the most promising emergent jazz musicians in town isn't some kid straight out of school or still in school. But at age 51, alto saxophonist Chris Burnett is just beginning to get noticed as his own man.

So where has he been until now? A stint in the Army's music programs kept Burnett, whose group plays the Drum Room on Saturday, busy for 22 years.

"In the military you didn't have to worry about having an instrument. You just went to the supply room and got one," he says. "You had jobs — you didn't have to go out and get them. You didn't have to worry about publicity. ... And if you wanted to put out a CD, you went to the studio down the hall."

"It was a whole different thing we got accustomed to."

Burnett is the son of an Air Force man from Olathe, and military life and musical life mingled in their home. Older brother Richie Pratt, who evolved into a player good enough to work in the New York Jazz Quartet alongside Frank Wes and Roland Hanna, kept his drum set in the living room and was a mentor to his little brother.

Burnett says his original goal in volunteering for the Army was "to stay in three years. ... Play as much as I could, learn as



**Chris Burnett**

**saturday**

The Chris Burnett Quintet appears at 7:30 p.m. Saturday at the Drum Room, in the President Hotel, 1329 Baltimore Ave.

At first he tried to run a music store in Waynesville, Mo., while commuting to classes at Webster University, two hours away in suburban St. Louis. Then he threw in the towel and moved closer to Kansas City about six years back. (He lives in Leavenworth now.)

ion about it now."

He has been writing new music, prolifically. "I have enough music now for about five CDs," he says. He has recorded one, "Time Flies," and hopes to be back in the studio working on new material soon.

Meanwhile, his group has been working out monthly at the Drum Room for more than a year, flexing its musical muscles on standard material. This week it's a quintet with Burnett on alto sax and flute, Will Matthews on guitar, Roger Wilder on piano, Ricky Anderson on bass and Mike Shanks on drums.

"It's been good to come home," Burnett says, "and the welcome means a lot to me. I remember when I was a young man, one of my goals was to be good enough to play jazz in Kansas City. To be able to go away, grow up, be a professional musician and come back full circle to play in Kansas City — that's a big deal for me."

**Noteworthy**

■ The Blue Room, 1600 E. 18th St., presents the Latin jazz group Makuza at 7 tonight; it's free. The Scamps perform at 8:30 p.m. Friday, and the Jazz Disciples perform with the inspired addition of singer-pianist Pam Watson and trombonist Karita Carter at 8:30 p.m. Saturday; cover is \$10. Organist Everette DeVan is in charge of the Monday jam session at 7 p.m.; that's free, too.

■ Drummer Brandon Draper and his New Quintet appear from 8 to midnight tonight at

KANSAS CITY STAR FEATURE

## LINER NOTES

### ABOUT THE HOTEL

The Hotel President was one of the most popular hotels in downtown Kansas City's Power & Light District. Opened in 1926, the President was just one of many luxurious hotels built in the city during this era. Notable guests have included Bob Dylan, Charles Lindbergh, and Presidents Hoover, Truman, Eisenhower, and Nixon. It hosted the headquarters for the 1928 Republican National Convention which nominated Herbert Hoover for President. The hotel's Drum Room lounge, which opened in 1941, was serviced by numerous legendary entertainers such as Frank Sinatra, the Marx Brothers, the Glen Miller Orchestra, Sammy Davis Jr., Benny Goodman, and Tommy Dorsey. The President closed in the early 1980s and sat vacant for over 20 years. In 2006 the hotel underwent a \$45 million renovation and reopened as a Hilton franchise, dubbed the

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**FEATURED PERFORMERS**

- Everette DeVan
- Chris Burnett
- Grand Marquis
- Megan Birdsall

**Chris Burnett**

A native of the Kansas City Area, award-winning composer and saxophone artist Chris Burnett got off to his prolific professional start at the age of 18 years old while performing, touring and recording with Army bands from 1974-1996. His 22-year career with noteworthy professional military music organizations provided vast legitimate educational opportunities that covered several specific areas of musical study; while simultaneously providing the essential incomparable real world performing and touring experiences that are necessary for an artist to mature and develop a unique musical voice. A modern thinker and early explorer of the digital music landscape, Burnett garnered more than a half million music downloads and sold CDs to fans in 38 countries via MP3.com (1999-2003) before most musicians had figured out that there were other ways than major record label contracts and brick-and-mortar retail stores to reach listeners. Since his return to Kansas City in 2001, Burnett has had the opportunity to perform along side or worked with such eminent musicians and notable groups as: Ahmad



**The Drum Room**  
*Join us for Happy Hour Daily 4:30 - 6:30*

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The Drum Room 1335 Baltimore Kansas City, MO 64105 {t} 816.303.1686

HOTEL PRESIDENT  
DRUM ROOM

Screen Capture of Archived DrumRoomKC.com

## LINER NOTES

Hilton President Kansas City. The President, along with multiple other hotels, was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1983.

The Hotel President was built in 1926 by the United Hotels Company. Founded in 1910 by Niagara Falls businessman Frank Dudley, United Hotels was a national chain of luxury hotels and at one time was the largest hotel company in the world. The Hotel President was designed by the architectural firm of Shepard & Wiser and constructed at a cost of around three million dollars. The fourteen-story building contained 453 guest rooms and upon its opening was considered one of the most elegant and advanced hotels in all of Kansas City. It contained several meeting spaces and ballrooms such as the Aztec Room, Walnut Room, and Congress Room, and a two-story Presidential Suite. It also included modern features such as a public address system and an ice producing plant, the first in any Kansas City hotel. The hotel's fame was cemented early in its history when it acted as the headquarters for the 1928 Republican National Convention. The convention nominated Herbert Hoover for president.

In 1941 the Hotel President underwent some renovations and opened a new cocktail lounge called the Drum Room. It was designed by the architectural firm of Neville and Sharp, who gave it a South Sea Island theme. It featured a giant kettle drum in the center as the bar, and large murals painted by New York artist Winold Reiss. The Drum Room frequently had live music and became perhaps the most popular lounge in the city, both for locals and visitors. A plethora of notable entertainers performed at the lounge, including Frank Sinatra, the Glenn Miller Orchestra, Patsy Cline, Benny Goodman, Tommy Dorsey, the Marx Brothers, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr., and Marilyn Maye.

The Hotel President closed around 1979 and sat vacant for over two decades. During this time a large amount of the hotel's furniture, fixtures, silverware, and works of art were auctioned off to the public. During the early 2000s several proposals for the creation of the Power & Light entertainment district called for the hotel to be razed and replaced with a park. The Kansas City Council ultimately intervened to save the building from demolition in any of the plans. In 2002 the Hotel President was acquired by real estate developer Ron Jury, who launched a \$45 million project to renovate the building into a modern hotel under the Hilton franchise. The lobby and several event spaces were restored to their 1940s appearance, and the Drum Room was reopened. The original 453 rooms were converted into 213 boutique rooms. The Hotel President reopened in early 2006 as the Hilton President Kansas City. For his efforts to save the hotel, Jury was given the Historic Preservation Award by the American Institute of Architect's Kansas City chapter.

(SOURCE: Straley, Steven Cody and Clio Admin. "Hotel President and the Drum Room." Clio: Your Guide to History. July 19, 2018. Accessed November 23, 2022. [theclio.com/entry/63490](https://theclio.com/entry/63490))

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## LINER NOTES



Photograph by James Ward Photography

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**Christopher Burnett, Kansas City**

November 30, 2022

[BurnettMusic.biz](http://BurnettMusic.biz)

**ARC-8746**

**Page 8 of 9**

## LINER NOTES

### THE STANDARDS, VOL. 2 "LIVE AT THE DRUM ROOM"

By Christopher Burnett

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#### ARC RECORDS

(UPC-A 860007808746)

[ArtistsRecordingCollective.biz](http://ArtistsRecordingCollective.biz)

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#### Featuring:

Dr. Mike Pagan, piano

James Ward, bass

Michael Shanks, drums

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#### Tracks | Durations:

1. All The Things You Are (Live) | 10:25

2. Yesterdays (Live) | 8:20

3. My One and Only Love (Live) | 3:39

4. Triste (Live) | 8:46

5. Black Narcissus (Live) | 6:52

6. Invitation (Live) | 7:39

7. Nefertiti (Live) | 6:42

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From the 2007 professional remote studio

recordings by WM Thornton, JBT Studio.

Cover photo by Duane Hallock Photography.

Recorded live at the Hilton President, Drum Room.

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#### CbQ Online:

<https://ChristopherBurnett.us>

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