

Guitarist Joshua Breakstone- Selected Quotes

"His flowing lines on uptempo cookers are impeccably clean and fiery, bearing the mark of a first-rate improviser, while his chordal work on heartbreaker ballads is the final word in finesse."

Guitar Player Magazine

"There is no shortage of young, knock-out jazz guitarists about us these days. And Joshua Breakstone is among the best of them."

Downbeat

"Fire in velvet. A fitting description of Joshua Breakstone's jazz guitar."

The Santa Fe New Mexican, Paul Weidman

"The style in which Joshua develops his fluid single-note solos used to be thought of as the Grant Green school, but now this man leads the school."

Jazz Hihyo (aka Jazz Critique), Tokyo, Japan

"Breakstone is such a keen student and doggedly inventive practitioner of the bebop lineage that his taste never gets in the way of his energy, and he has both in abundance."

City Pages, Minneapolis, MN

"He's putting some good records out; they're very good, very musical- very provocative. You can hear all the influences of all the great guitar players, but there's something individual there. It takes a guy quite some years before he becomes an original, so he must have started pretty young."

Red Rodney

"Breakstone's playing emphasizes inventive, lyrical single-note melody lines. Though his fingers have been described as 'continual blur' onstage, he never lets frenetic technique detract from his interesting melodies which always have both intelligence and feeling behind them. Breakstone says 'Jazz should sing, be pretty to listen to, and feel good,' and he is true to his philosophy. To anyone who has heard him, it is clear he is on his way to making his mark as one of the great jazz instrumentalists."

The Bass Clef, London, England

"With a firm grasp of the bebop language, Breakstone nevertheless avoids its cliches, instead unfolding a storyline in his solos, all the while building interest with economical, elegant lines and sustaining longer notes with a clear, rounded guitar sound."

Masters of Jazz Guitar (Miller Freeman Books), Charles Alexander

"Breakstone was a contrast to [Herb] Ellis' polished demeanor but not his musical savvy. While the dark-suited Ellis sat stoically mid-stage, his Gibson ES-175 guitar squarely in his lap, Breakstone stood bopping and weaving solo flights from his Gibson L-5 in his gray cardigan.....The union of the two guitarists was what the bill was all about, and it brought about the expected marvelous results. Leaping head first into 'Body and Soul', Ellis and Breakstone traded chorus for chorus, to the delight of the crowd and apparently themselves."

St. Louis Dispatch, David Surkamp, review of performance with Herb Ellis

"Just after 8:30 p.m. Wednesday at the Cafe Luxford in Minneapolis, jazz guitarist Joshua Breakstone launched into 'Bouncing With Bud' at a frenzied pace. Breakstone's fretwork was flashy but purposeful, blending a warm liquid tone with forceful improvisations as he shaved and guided the melody of the tune to his liking. His eyes were half-closed in concentration as he bobbed in time to the rhythm, enacting the song's title. Nearly 3 1/2 hours later, abetted by bassist Billy Peterson, and drummer Kenny Horst, Breakstone wrung the last notes from the evening's final ballad. Over the course of three sets the trio had collaborated on a repertoire ranging from complex bebop tunes to a basic blues jam to an untitled song Breakstone composed last weekend. Along the way, Breakstone.... solidified his stature as one of the more resourceful and compelling young guitarists in jazz." The Minneapolis Star Tribune, performance review, Britt Robson

"Joshua Breakstone, a young guitarist from New Jersey, is at the West End Cafe through today, playing with a serene, swinging assurance and a melodic warmth that suggests a musician of longer experience than he has had. Leading a seasoned group of sidemen- Kenny Barron, piano; Dennis Irwin, bass, and Keith Copeland, drums- Mr. Breakstone produces guitar lines that flow through smooth, mellow-toned, bop-based phrasing.....There is depth and thoughtfulness in his playing, a sense of graceful development even when he is swirling along with jumping intensity. When he seems to be moving at a headlong pace, he is calm, with time to pause as though to consider his next move, to throw in a jagged, turning phrase and then hurry on, still unruffled." The New York Times, John S Wilson, performance review

Record Reviews

"4/4=1"

"As for Breakstone, his playing sparkles because of his strong sense of melody and his wit.....This 'bopping' album is smooth and clean and a real pleasure for one's ears" Cadence, Richard B Kamins

"Evening Star"

"...Breakstone further establishes himself as one of the most gifted and formidable jazz guitarists in the country right now." Note For Note, Los Angeles, CA

"Echoes"

"My ears find him akin to the melodicism, airiness and swing of Jimmy Rainey and the drive and fluid legato single-note approach of Tal Farlow and Charlie Christian. The Bud Powell tune 'Oblivion' and Barry Harris' 'Even Steven' are reasons enough to acquire this disc. Add the phenomenal work of baritonist Pepper Adams (who died 7 months later) and Kenny Barron's bottomless well of elegance on the piano, and you have a grand prize-winning project with no dispute." Jazz Educators Journal, Herb Wong

"Self Portrait In Swing"

"Breakstone's a gifted young man and the world is literally at his fingertips. He plays jazz guitar like a veteran of countless bebop bar nights, yet with the enthusiasm of the new kid on the block- i.e., with taste, tenderness, and a bit of gentle funk." The Twin Cities Reader, Minneapolis, MN, Tom Surowicz

"It ['Self Portrait in Swing'] continues his own line of melodic invention with a hearty warmth underneath it all. His alone is the combination of long, lucid phrases, unexpected yet fitting quotations and arrowsharp inflection on an Irving Berlin tune or the driving title cut. Plus, he's got the great pianist Kenny Barron aboard to add unique twists and turns." Jazziz, Bob Young

"Through his series of recordings for Contemporary, Joshua Breakstone has proven time and time again that he is one of today's top bop guitarists...Breakstone....sounds relaxed at each of the tempos, the rhythm section is beyond criticism and Self-Portrait in Swing is a flawless bop date that will still sound fresh 20 years from now." Cadence, Scott Yanow

"9X3"

"Bud Powell's 'John's Abbey' comes bursting out of the gates, and the Monk medley is an introspective piece that recognizes the restraint and subtlety in Breakstone's playing. The guitarist's growth is clear here, with his increased responsibility for bringing the action. He's hearing the whole song and it all comes out through his fingers. He sees past the simple interpretations, keeps it close to earth, but finds ways to slip past the norm, maturing like John Scofield in that way. He hasn't altered his style drastically in the trio setting- he suddenly isn't playing all chorded solos. He's just keeping a focus on the song and playing with confidence." Guitar Extra, Robin Tolleson

"This Just In"

"In his most recent release, 'This Just In', Breakstone dabbles in improvs of Sinatra, Gillespie, and bossa nova classics with grit and style, then inserts some of his own originals to finish off a crisp, succinct, foot-tapping triumph." The Albuquerque (New Mexico) Tribune, JM Barol

"Tribute to Grant Green"

"This is a hard-swinging, well played session from start to finish with Green's two compositions, the cooker 'Grantstand' and the blues 'Grant's Greenery' among its highlights, as is Duke Pearson's classic 'Idle Moments', which was the title of one of Green's 1963 Blue Note recordings. Although Breakstone says in his notes that recreating the mood of the original would have been impossible, he and his colleagues don't miss by much.... This is an excellent session, rhythmically strong and harmonically rich, and a splendid tribute to a talented musician who died much too far ahead of his time." Cadence

"Ultimately, a tribute to Grant Green must be tasteful, yet daring. It also has to swing and feel bluesy. This one gets a thumbs-up on all accounts."
Vintage Guitar Magazine

"The Music of Bud Powell"

"Breakstone is a fluid and convincing soloist with a style perfectly suited to Bud. His lines build logically and even at breakneck speed he's in command of his box. I like the way he paces himself, developing his ideas in a leisurely way even when they involve a long stream of eighth notes. I also like the way he refers back to the melodies and his penchant for sly, unobvious quotes.....The trio interplay is terrific, the guitar soloing top-notch, and the choice of material exemplary."
JazzTimes, Duck Baker

"A Jamais"

"Joshua Breakstone is back with what he loves doing best: playing guitar with a melodic grace. One could even see it as an immaculate articulation, his lines clean, his notes uncomplicated, doublets that augment the shape, improvisations creating craft of a high order."
www.allaboutjazz.com, Jerry D'Souza

"Memoire"

"When I originally received this CD I was expecting a lot of up-tempo guitar playing with blistering single line excitement and bop infused tunes. But as I listened more, I began to realize that not only was there some very serious playing going on, but more importantly, what I was hearing was the heartfelt creation of a musician who has the envious ability to take a beautiful song and make it that much more endearing. For that I say, merci Joshua Breakstone, merci."
www.jazzguitarlife.com, Lyle Robinson