

PAUL TILLOTSON

PAUL TILLOTSON • PT3 • THE LOVE TRIO

Paul Tillotson says "my mission is to play great improvised music, deeply touching the souls of audiences around the world, spreading the joy that is created while creating music that comes from love."

"Thank God for Paul Tillotson." -Vernel Fournier

"Tillotson leers over the ivories like a horny teenager. He dances, he prances, he makes funny faces, he laughs and howls and sticks out his tongue. He squeezes and tweaks the audience like a balloon animal and in return, they do anything he asks. They compete in sing-alongs like toddlers at a Barney matinee. They make monkey grunts and they screech like parrots. And remember . . . this is a jazz crowd and Tillotson is a jazz player." -The Boise Weekly

"The leader's chair was filled by Paul Tillotson, a talented [Gene] Harris protégé." -The Los Angeles Times

Tillotson's latest release, **Tequila Time**, is another CD with his special sense of fun, respect to the past, and reckless abandonment of what "should happen" on a jazz CD. His music has a way of sparking the collective imagination of all who listen.

In New York City, Paul searched for his perfect trio. After finding a drummer with a deep groove, who creates an original approach to playing music every time he plays -James Wormworth- the bass seat was all that was left. James recommended long time friend Mike Merritt, from the Conan O'Brien Show, and the three musicians have since developed a musical rapport rarely seen in jazz groups today. Rapports so undeniable that when first time listeners are exposed to the trio, they freeze in their steps, listen, and then smile from ear to ear, hence creating The Love Trio.

Tequila Time, his first recording for Scrapper Records, The Love Trio's second together, is a collection of interpretations of songs by Prince, Ellington, Lennon/McCartney and Joni Mitchell; featuring "The Beautiful Ones" and "Big Yellow Taxi," as well as 7 new Tillotson originals. "I love playing songs that mean something to me," says Tillotson. "I select songs that have melodies and lyrics that stir my spirit. Even though I am an instrumentalist I like to know the lyrics of the song because it helps me shape the phrasing and melody."

Other treasures recorded here for the first time are, "Apple Blossom," featuring Mike Merritt playing the melody on bass, "The Tickler," a nod to the great Pink Floyd, "4pm," a beautiful ballad and local favorite in Sun Valley, Idaho, "Dot, Dot, Dot," an up tempo hit with the NYC swing dancers, "Morpheus," a dark melancholy ballad named by the famous 'Big Cid' of Sun Valley, "Tequila Time," a ruckus calypso solute to the late great Gene Harris and "Gena's Song," an ode to a beautiful Himalayan pussy cat.

What separates Tillotson from many jazz pianists today is his ability to write and create his own beautiful music. When he performs live, the audience experiences his pleasure of sharing his music with them. For **Tequila Time**, he wrote seven original tracks. "My writing style is simple - I wake up with an idea in my head and I sing it. Sometimes I'm walking down the street in Manhattan or skiing down a double diamond slope in Sun Valley and a melody will come to me . . . I sing it over and over then I sit down at the piano (Margaret, his 1928 Mason & Hamlin) and fill it out. When it's done I present it to the guys and we create a masterpiece together."

Born in Boise, Idaho, Paul has made New York City his home since 1989. The last of six kids, Paul started playing the piano at age ten. His first gig was playing juice harp with his mother on guitar in church. He returns to Idaho every winter to play for four months, with his trio, at the famous Sun Valley Lodge. Over the years, Tillotson has been celebrated for many successes - from his early self produced recordings to his live shows. He's played across America with such renowned performers as Gene Harris, Lynn Seaton, Vernel Fournier, Mike Merritt (Conan O'Brien Show), James Wormworth, Lew Soloff, Chris Minh Doky, Luther Hughes, Paul Kreibich, Matt Wilson, Aton Fig (David Letterman Show), Shawn Pelton (Saturday Night Live Band), Mark Pender, Jerry Vivinno, Red Hollaway, Jimmy Norman (The Coasters), Ernie Watts, Chris Botti (Sting) and Diana Krall. Tillotson has performed his music in "The Montreux Jazz Festival," "The Den Haag Jazz Festival," "The Jazz in the Canyon Festival," "The Gene Harris Jazz Festival" and "Levon Helm's Midnight Ramble."

Gene Harris spent the last twenty years of his life in Boise, Idaho. "I have witnessed so much great music beginning with my mentor and close friend Gene Harris," Paul recalls. "We used to hang out after hours in the bar after Gene's gig in the lobby of the Idanha Hotel. We talked about everything from philosophy, relationships, politics, adventure, life, love, to music. He instilled the master's love of perfection and love of life onto me and helped me understand the path to great music is peaceful and rewarding."