

Ryan Keberle

Trombonist Ryan Keberle has cultivated one of the more diverse careers in modern jazz. A fixture of the Grammy-winning Maria Schneider Orchestra, he leads the genre-busting ensemble Catharsis, and in 2018, Reverso—his band with pianist Frank Woeste—released *Suite Ravel*, inspired by the classical masterpiece *Le Tombeau De Couperin*. Earlier this year, a trio version of Reverso released *The Melodic Line*.

DownBeat met with Keberle via videoconference, as he commented on tracks from his home in New York's Catskill Mountains.

Al Grey and the Basie Wing

"Open Wider, Please" (*The Last Of The Big Plungers*, Argo, 1960) Grey, Benny Powell, trombones; Joe Newman, trumpet; Billy Mitchell, tenor saxophone; Charlie Fowlkes, baritone saxophone; Floyd Morris, piano; Ed Jones, bass; Sonny Payne, drums.

I love this track so much. I love the writing; I love the rhythm section, so swinging. If I had to guess, I might say Benny Powell or Jimmy Cleveland? I'm totally stumped. 5 stars, though. Phenomenal track. [after] I should have thought Al when I heard the double-timing. He was the one with the mute. Usually the dead giveaway was the sound—he had the biggest and most rotund sound there ever was in trombone history.

Alan Ferber

"Magnolia" (*Chamber Songs: Music For Nonet And Strings*, Sunnyside, 2010) Ferber, trombone; Scott Wendholt, trumpet; Jon Gordon, alto saxophone; John Ellis, tenor saxophone; Douglas Yates, bass clarinet; Nate Radley, guitar; Bryn Roberts, piano; Matt Clohesy, bass; Mark Ferber, drums; Zach Brock, Sara Caswell, Olivia De Prato, Leena Waite, violin; Corrina Albright, Victor Lowrie, viola; Jody Redhage Ferber, Maria Jeffers, cello; Ike Sturm, bass; JC Sanford, string orchestra conductor.

I know who it is based on the drummer—and the violinist, too. Alan Ferber—it only takes a couple of measures to recognize him. When I first heard the guitar and piano carry the melody—it's such a unique sound—I was immediately thinking [Bob] Brookmeyer, especially with the harmony. Alan is obviously a master composer and arranger, in addition to being a master trombonist.

That tune is absolutely perfect jazz harmony. I wasn't 100 percent certain, but then I heard Sara Caswell take the solo, and she's unmistakable. And then, of course, Mark Ferber, Alan's brother, on drums.

Mark is such an unsung hero of the New York jazz scene. ... I've been lucky enough to have him play my large ensemble music a couple of times recently, and he always plays things I love. 5 stars.

Urbie Green

"How About You?" (*East Coast Jazz Series No. 6*, Bethlehem, 1955) Green, trombone; Al Cohn (aka Ike Horowitz), bass clarinet; Danny Bank, clarinet; Doug Mettome, trumpet; Jimmy Lyon, piano; Oscar Pettiford, bass; Jimmy Campbell, drums.

Wow, that's perfect jazz. The arrangement speaks so directly of the West Coast tradition from the '50s and '60s. On the trombone, I want to say Urbie Green, but Urbie was more of an East Coast guy for most of his career ... [after] Urbie passed away recently, but shortly before he left us, we were very fortunate to throw a big party in his honor. It was a special time, the only time I got to meet him in person. Such a touching tribute for someone who left a profound legacy. You hear him play the melody there: It's so smooth, so clean, so swinging, so expressive—it's mastery.

Michael Dease

"Mirror Image" (*Never More Here*, Posi-Tone, 2019) Dease, trombone; Steve Wilson, alto saxophone; Renee Rosnes, piano; Gerald Cannon, bass; Lewis Nash, drums.

I know who it is, but I want to keep listening. That's undoubtedly Mike Dease. Unmistakable. A handful of trombonists of my generation are



really pushing the trombone to new places, especially from a technical standpoint, just doing things on the instrument that no one thought was possible. Mike releases like two albums every year, so it's hard to keep up, but I really dug that tune. 5 stars. We went to college together at Juilliard; we overlapped by a year.

The Pugh-Taylor Project

"747" (*The Pugh-Taylor Project*, DMP, 1984) Jim Pugh, trombone; Dave Taylor, bass trombone; Dave Ratajczak, drum programming.

Didn't see that coming. Wow. I have to give that 5 stars, because I've never heard anything like that; I don't say that often anymore. My initial thoughts would be West Coast cats, like Bill Reichenbach, Phil Teele or perhaps East Coast cats like Dave Taylor ... The tenor trombone playing was just extraordinary, which makes me think West Coast. Whoever wrote it obviously knows the way two trombones can resonate with each other in different ways, exploring the slide and the glissando.

[after] I should have guessed [Pugh], one of the all-time greats on our instrument, and Dave Taylor is one of the all-time greats of any instrument. He is also someone who is very much an inspiration to me and a bit of a mentor to me over the years.

Jon Hatamiya

"The Little Island (*Dreamscape #2*)" (*More Than Anything*, Orenda, 2020) Hatamiya, trombone; Albert Baliwas, alto saxophone; Colin Cook, Yunus Iyriboz, guitar; Jacob Mann, piano; Logan Kane, electric bass; Colin McDaniel, drums.

I have no idea. Very few instruments rock out as good as the trombone. The trombonist at times sounded a bit like Jacob Garchik, but I don't think it's him. Definitely of the moment, in terms of the way they play. I love hearing the trombone rock out and not be afraid to use the slide and make some sounds that aren't perfectly round and centered. 5 stars, for sure.

Wayne Coniglio/Scott Whitfield

"2nd Avenue Stroll" (*Fast Friends*, Summit, 2014) Coniglio, bass trombone; Whitfield, trombone; Ken Kehner, piano; Eric Warren, bass; Kevin Gianino, drums.

I don't know who these [trombonists] are, but they're both super badass. There are not too many bass trombonists out there who can play like that. This definitely sounds more West Coast to me, just the sonic attributes.

It sounds relatively recent, like in the last 40 years. Is it Andy Martin? Mark Nightingale? [after] Ah, of course, Scott Whitfield. He is an incredible trombonist, a freak on the instrument. He's referencing everybody, in all genres, of all geographical scenes, throughout history. There are very few people who can play like that.

DB

The "Blindfold Test" is a listening test that challenges the featured artist to discuss and identify the music and musicians who performed on selected recordings. The artist is then asked to rate each tune using a 5-star system. No information is given to the artist prior to the test.