

**Violinist DIANE MONROE & Vibraphonist TONY MICELI
To Release Exploratory Duo Album, *Alone Together*,
Available August 19 on Dreambox Media**

**Album Celebrates Three Decades of
Philadelphia-Based Pair's Collaboration**

**Repertoire Spans Jazz, Classical, Standards,
Spirituals and Original Compositions**



"[Diane Monroe's] technique is impeccable and her improvisations rich and imaginative." - All About Jazz

*"[Tony Miceli] is a vibraphonist of astonishing virtuosity, musical resilience, and inventiveness. His vibes playing is nothing short of phenomenal."
- All About Jazz*

[Stream Tracks from Alone Together](#)

Two of Philadelphia's most revered jazz artists unite for an intimate, exploratory duo session on ***Alone Together***, due out August 19. Violinist **Diane Monroe** and vibraphonist **Tony Miceli** have been playing together since the mid-1980s, and the fruits of that three-decade relationship are evident throughout their debut collaboration. The album's thirteen tracks encompass the wide range of the pair's mutual interests, from jazz to classical, standards to spirituals, originals to classics, and even an unexpected TV theme song.

"I've always been fascinated by how two instruments can play together and make a complete picture," says Miceli. "A duo is very personal. It's about as personal as you can get. It's just the two of you, and every note one plays is going to effect the other."

"It's all about blending," Monroe adds, "finding a sound that works individually as well as collectively."

Both Monroe and Miceli have long histories of forging rich collaborations in Philadelphia and beyond. Monroe has bridged the jazz and classical traditions for most of her career. She studied at Oberlin Conservatory, Philadelphia Musical Academy, Michigan State University,



and the Curtis Institute of Music. She toured for more than a decade with the Max Roach Double Quartet and the Uptown String Quartet and performed extensively as a member of the String Trio of New York, all ensembles which fused classical virtuosity with jazz improvisation. Over the course of her career she's played with such renowned artists as Percy Heath, Steve Wilson, Dave Grusin, Joe Lovano, Reggie Workman, Wycliffe Gordon, and Uri Caine, and is currently a member of saxophonist/composer Bobby Zankel's Warriors of the Wonderful Sound big band.

Miceli has been a force on the Philly jazz scene since 1980 while touring the world and mentoring young players as an educator. In 1990 he co-founded the group Monkadelphia, dedicated to playing the music of Thelonious Monk. He is also a member of the PhilOrch Jazz Ensemble, a quartet featuring members of the Philadelphia Orchestra. He has worked with countless jazz luminaries as both a leader and a sideman, including David Liebman, Jimmy Bruno, Ken Peplowski, John Blake, John Swana, Joe Magnarelli, Steve Slagle, Larry McKenna, and many others.

The two first joined forces in the '80s, when Miceli enlisted Monroe to work on jazz arrangements he'd made of classic rock songs - an ongoing interest most recently manifested in his latest group, The Jost Project, which has recorded

songs by the Beatles, Simon and Garfunkel, Led Zeppelin, and Aerosmith. They continued to reunite sporadically over the ensuing decades, finally forming a quartet in the mid-2000s. By 2009 they'd begun discussing the possibility of playing duo, but both found the prospect daunting.

"We were kind of scared," Monroe admits. "I was coming from playing with pianists where the whole range of the keyboard was covered, so I was used to hearing all those harmonies. I knew that Tony is such a wonderful harmonizer. He was a great harmonizer, but the issue was that I knew that the vibraphone was also limited, but he had trepidations too. Finally we just said, 'We're gonna do this,' but it was a slow process."

Over the course of the next year the two developed a sound together, and by 2010 began a series of live webcasts from Miceli's basement. These virtual concerts not only placed the pressure of a live situation on the duo's shoulders, but allowed them to gradually accrue a loyal fanbase. "I always felt like we had an audience with the webcasts," Monroe recalls. "I have a very active imagination, so as soon as I get on stage I get scared, no matter where it is. I play differently, hence that's where the growth comes in."

"Over that year, I learned so much about music," Miceli continues. "We really stuck together through thick and thin and finally felt like we could cover all the bases of the music."

The diverse material the duo selected for ***Alone Together*** reflects the breadth of their experiences. "We wanted to find interesting, different kinds of tunes that would cross over a little bit," explains Miceli. The album opens with guitarist Ralph Towner's classic "[Icarus](#)," originally written for the Paul Winter Consort, which Monroe cites as a longtime favorite. The track exemplifies the beauty of the pair's collaboration, with Monroe wringing deeply-felt emotion from the melody over Miceli's rippling vibes.

Miceli's contribution to the repertoire, "[Vince Guaraldi](#)," pays tribute to the pianist and composer best known for his soundtracks to the classic "Peanuts" TV specials, including "A Charlie Brown Christmas" and "It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown." Both Miceli and Monroe fondly recalled growing up on Guaraldi's indelible themes. "For a lot of people my age, that might have been their first exposure to jazz," Miceli says. "He wrote beautiful melodies, and as my musical taste grew I began to realize more and more how heavy he was. Thinking of him was a great inspiration for me."

Monroe's original piece, "[Fleeting Blues](#)," revisits a composition she originally wrote while in residency at Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania. The piece

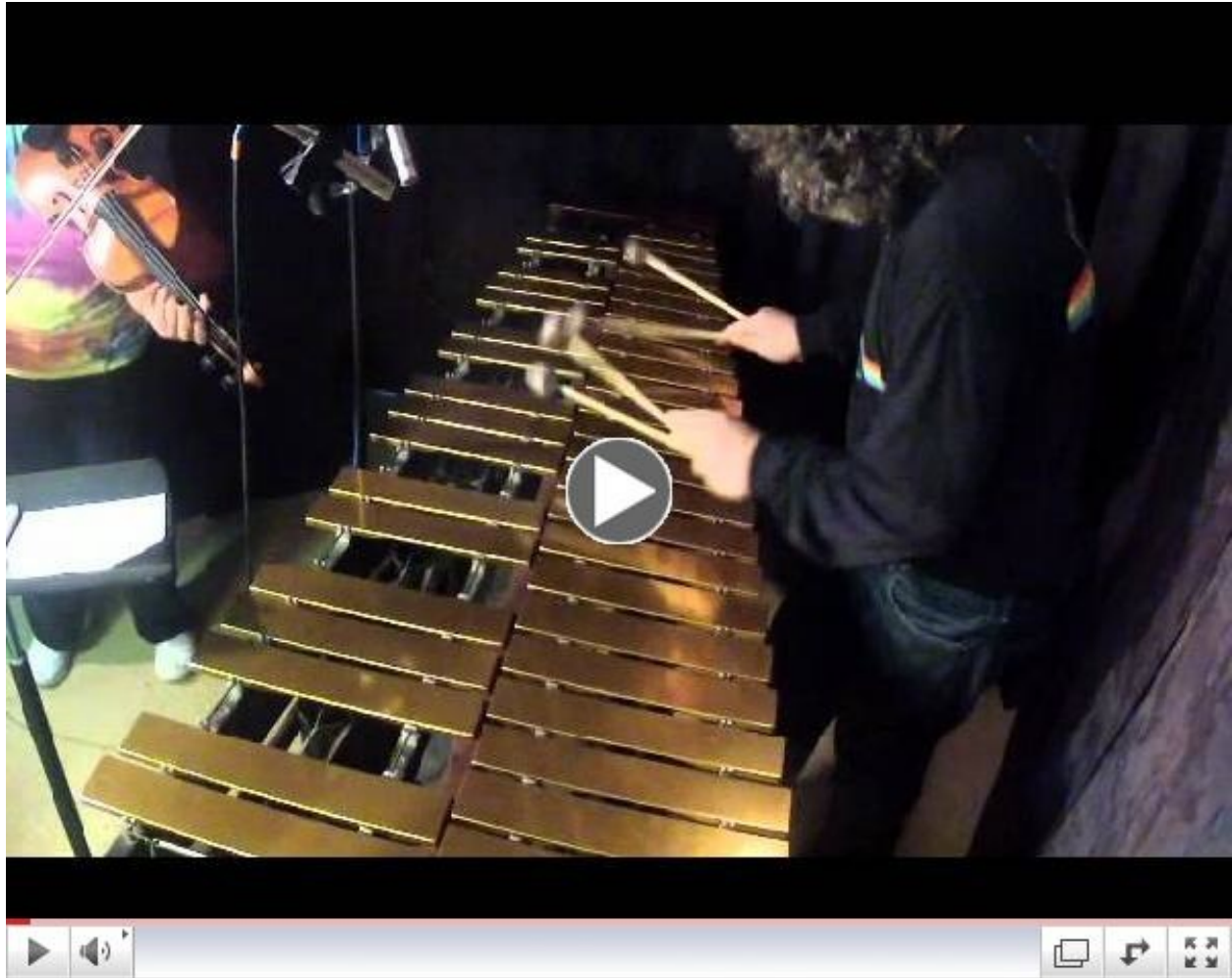
was inspired by a series of paintings illustrating blues musicians by artist and Lafayette professor Curlee Holton that originally incorporated guitar, electronic loops, and a drum machine but here gets a much more organic treatment.

Both "Bachianas Brasileiras," by Brazilian composer Heitor Villa-Lobos, and Chick Corea's classic "Spain" take advantage of Monroe's classical background and the ability of both to move freely between the jazz and classical worlds. Corea's much-loved piece was derived from Spanish classical composer Joaquín Rodrigo's "Concierto de Aranjuez."

Miceli's extensive experience in the jazz world inspired the duo to include three standards: "East of the Sun and West of the Moon," "Here's That Rainy Day," and the title track, "Along Together". The vibist's deft playing comes as no surprise, but the three pieces provide a stellar opportunity for Monroe, whose jazz playing has often leaned toward the avant-garde, to show off her straightforward chops. Two Monk compositions - "Eronel" and "Misterioso" - allow both to venture further out.

Both are also given a single solo spotlight on the album. Miceli chose the classic country song "Tennessee Waltz," which he places firmly on his "most beautiful tunes ever list." Monroe plays a harrowing rendition of the spiritual "Wade in the Water," which evokes the tune's deeper meaning, a warning to enslaved African-Americans to obliterate their scent when being hunted by dogs. "The mood at the beginning of the piece depicts how scary that was," she says. "Then this melody emerges which is so beautiful and haunting at the same time."

Finally, the disc ends with its biggest surprise - the theme from the original "Star Trek" TV series. Both Monroe and Miceli readily admit to being "Trekkies", but Miceli says that there are more relevant reasons for performing the tune. "The musician has to find ways to bring something interesting to people," he says. "It's not like you can go out and play 'Days of Wine and Roses' and people recall the movie anymore. I think when you play something it's got to move people and invoke memories and feelings, and if you play 'I Remember April' in front of a twenty-something crowd, they don't necessarily have a tie to it. A beautiful melody is a beautiful melody."



Diane Monroe & Tony Miceli: *Alone Together*

Upcoming Diane Monroe & Tony Miceli Duo Performances:

*** Thursday, August 21 / Hawthorne Park / Philadelphia, PA**

Friday, September 19 / Chris' Jazz Cafe / Philadelphia, PA

+ Wednesday, September 24 / Kitano / New York NY

**with Friends*

+ with bassist Tony Marino and drummer Jonathan Blake

***Alone Together* - Track Listing/Composers**

1. Icarus (Ralph Towner)
2. Vince Guaraldi (Tony Miceli)
3. Spain (Chick Corea)

4. Fleetin' Blues (Diane Monroe)
5. East of the Sun (Brooks Bowman)
6. Bachianas Brasilieras No. 5 (Hector Villa Lobos, arr. Tony Miceli)
7. Tennessee Waltz (Pee Wee King/Redd Stewart)
8. Here's That Rainy Day (Jimmy Van Heusen, arr. Diane Monroe)
9. Wade in the Water (Traditional, arr. Diane Monroe)
10. Eronel (Thelonious Monk)
11. Alone Together (Arthur Schwartz)
12. Misterioso (Thelonious Monk)
13. Star Trek (Alexander "Sandy" Mair Courage)

Diane Monroe & Tony Miceli · Alone Together
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