

**Jon Weber, SIMPLE COMPLEX**  
**2ndCenturyJazz**  
**Records**



His program of original compositions gives pianist Jon Weber an opportunity to share his ideas with the world. From moody ballads, such as the one with Roy Hargrove on flugelhorn or the one with Paul McCandless on oboe, to several highly-charged romps with various ensembles, Weber offers variety and

a touch of class. His crisp piano cascades rebound with clarity as he creates fresh scenes. The ensembles swing, however their clarity lies within the clarion harmony that pervades for most of the session. Gary Burton, Diego Urcola and Eric Alexander serve as the front line for a large portion, and Weber ensures that the ensemble remains cohesive. As everything falls into place neatly, the unit is able to interpret each composition with clarity.

Simple Complex finds the leader combining concepts familiar to the Jazz student. The chord progressions of "Giant Steps" are presented here, in all twelve keys, over an Afro-Cuban 7/4 pulse. Weber, Alexander, Burton, and drummer Mark Walker stretch out individually and in ensemble. The leader's driving attitude gives the piece spirit, as they swing fiercely and with passion. Kurt Elling and Alicia Reneé provide wordless vocals for "Is It Only Me?" an exotic mixture of East Asian themes that includes one of several cameo appearances by Avishai Cohen. Throughout Weber's impressionistic world journey, his Jazz roots remain prominent. As the sextet works out on several pieces, you're drawn into the mesmerizing quality of the mainstream and its journey from Ragtime syncopation to Bebop and beyond. Weber says it with backbeats, suitelike movements, and a cast of characters who comply by supplying superb musicianship.

Jim Santella