

KENNEY POLSON



“A seasoned offering that is focused on the entrancing subject of love.”

– *Stacatofy.com*

“A winning collection of polished music offered with esprit de corps.”

★★★★★

– *Grady Harp, Amazon*

JAZZ SAXOPHONIST Kenney Polson is an accomplished composer and educator. Based in the Pacific Northwest, he has lived and performed in over 50 countries. Known widely as a smooth jazz artist, his seasoned musical style incorporates Latin, classical, New Age, rhythm & blues, funk and gospel influences.

Polson has appeared on U.S. television with jazz greats Kenny Burrell, Jimmy Heath, Phil Woods, David Sanborn and Wynton Marsalis. He has performed live with Joe Williams, Gil Scott-Heron, Michael Henderson, Norman Connors, Bettye Swan, and Lee Garrett.

He has toured Japan, Korea, Hawaii, Colombia, Brazil, and over a dozen Caribbean Islands. In 2016 and 2017, he toured extensively with Rick James’s Original Stone City Band playing major festivals such as Capital City Jazz Festival and Orange County Funk Fest in California.

With the Kenney Polson group and other ensembles, he has appeared at the Stockton Smooth Jazz Festival, PDX Jazz Festival and Vanport Jazz Festival. His smooth tones are well known in Pacific Northwest jazz haunts such as The Jazz Station in Eugene, Jack London Jazz Club in Portland, The Royal Esquire in Seattle and the 1905 Jazz Club in Portland.

His 2019 album, *For Lovers Only*, blends smooth jazz with rhythm and blues and includes leading players such as guitarist Bruce Conte and keyboardist Roger Smith (Tower of Power), trumpeter Larry Gittens (Kool & The Gang), guitarist Phil Upchurch (Donny Hathaway and George Benson), and smooth jazz pioneer – pianist Tom Grant. Trombonist Fred Wesley (Parliament Funkadelic) and bassist/vocalist Michael Henderson (Miles Davis, Stevie Wonder) are also featured.

Kenney Polson was born in Kansas City, Missouri to a musical family. His grandfather, “Chubby Wayne” Harshaw (Count Basie, Cab Calloway), was a major musical influence, along with his Uncle Charles, who sang with the Coasters. With substantial touring and recording under his belt, Polson went on to earn a master’s degree in jazz composition and arranging from Howard University in 1997.

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KENNEY POLSON FOR LOVERS ONLY

This CD is really exciting for me because of the musicians involved. Before I began, I decided to make a project blending Smooth Jazz with Rhythm & Blues. This is not an original concept because it has been done before, but it was something that really spoke to me. So I called in favors from friends—guys from WAR, The Isley Brothers, Kool & The Gang, Malo, Rufus, and Tower of Power. Many of them are not playing solos, but mixing R&B guys with jazz guys really makes for a great sound, and they are laying down killer grooves to augment the feel of these melodies.

Stella By Starlight 5:35 (Victor Young & Neil Washington) I wanted to make a smooth jazz version of this jazz standard. It features one of the pioneers of smooth jazz, Tom Grant (piano). Even while delivering a smooth jazz version, I wanted to keep one foot in the traditional sound, so I intentionally eliminated the use of synthesizers. We also included backing vocals to help hold the listener's interest. Tom and I are having a great time, especially towards the end where we are trading fours.

Innocence 4:18 (Kenney Polson) I composed this selection in honor of all the innocent people who have suffered grave consequences from false accusations, including lovers who may have been caught up in the crossfire. It features my good friend Fred Wesley on trombone.

Blessed 4:25 (Kenney Polson) I wanted to express my feelings as a person who has gone through some hard times. We didn't have much when we were growing up, but we learned how to appreciate what we did have. I have never forgotten that and really appreciate what I have right now. This selection has a nice smooth groove, which, for me, represents good times. Bruce Conte (Tower of Power) plays a duet with me (on tenor). I'm so happy and blessed to do a few selections with him.

Valentine Love 3:57 (Michael Henderson) This tune has been one of my favorites for a long time. To have the composer (Michael Henderson) play bass and sing on the tune is an honor and a blessing. This is the only selection with lead vocals, and if you listen to the lyrics, you will find that it is definitely for lovers.

Love On A Two Way Street 3:34 (Bert Keyes & Sylvia Robinson) A radio-friendly selection, which takes the listener down memory lane. Soft soprano saxophone helps to make it a good memory by taking the melody all the way, using the lyrics as the guide. We gave it a fresh feel with a kind of hip-hop beat.

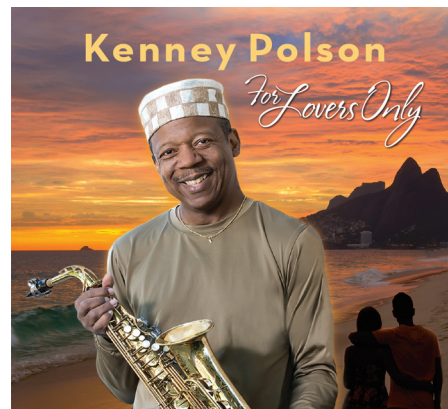
La La (Means I Love You) 3:27 (Tom Bell & William Hart) My mom loved this tune, and I think a whole lot of others loved it too since it was a hit at one time. It's one of the easiest sing-a-long tunes I've come across. The audience always participates when we play it, and it brings back great memories for me.

Black Swan 4:56 (Kenney Polson) A tribute to the first Black-owned record company, Black Swan Records. Their releases were dubbed "race records" by non-whites. In order to make sales, many of their releases were about love. This is a duet between alto sax and guitar. Our special guest guitarist is the great Phil Upchurch who has played with artists like Donny Hathaway and George Benson. Check out the related video!

Forever Yours 4:33 (Kenney Polson) This is the tune in which I experimented the most. The melody is led by Larry Gittens (muted trumpet), with a Miles Davis kind of attitude and me on soprano sax. What makes this different for me is the instrumentation and the players: Bob Russell (alto flute), organ (Roger Smith), and me on bass clarinet.

Passion 4:28 (Kenney Polson) I don't think any CD or event is complete without a ballad. This tune really sets the mood for a romantic evening. I am especially happy with special guest Roger Smith (Tower of Power) who plays organ on this selection. The inspiration came from the idea of being alone with a special person with no interruptions.

For Lovers Only 3:44 (Kenney Polson) This selection was written with lovers in mind. I have purposely chosen this tempo for conversation and attention to the other partner. I imagine a glass of wine, candlelight, and a fireplace to help set the mood.



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