

All Jazzed Up

Hiromi's Sonicbloom infuses classics with joyful energy

She's been called a marvel, a musical vixen, a major player with one mean set of chops. Hiromi Uehara, Japan's bright young jazz star, has been drawing audacious accolades since bursting onto the music scene in 2003 with her debut album, *Another Mind*.

Blending jazz with elements of classical music, rock and Latin beats, Hiromi has created a unique musical style even she is at a loss to describe.

"I don't want to put a name on my music," the 30-year-old pianist says. "Other people can put a name on what I do. It's just the union of what I've been listening to and what I've been learning."

The lessons started at the age of 6 when Hiromi was taught by her first classical piano instructor to tap into the intuitive as well as the technical aspects of music. After just one year, she enrolled in the Yamaha School of Music in Shizouka, Japan. By 12, she was performing in public with some very high-profile orchestras.

A chance meeting with Chick Corea in Tokyo at the age of 17 led to a performance with the Grammy-winning jazz pianist the very next day. Two years ago, the two reunited at the Tokyo Blue Note Jazz Club to record a live album – *Duet/Chick Corea and Hiromi*.

That CD was the fifth she has released since graduating from the prestigious Berklee College of Music in Boston. Her latest album, *Beyond Standard*, released in 2008, offers listeners exciting, smart arrangements of old familiar tunes like Rodgers & Hammerstein's "My Favorite Things," Gershwin's "I Got Rhythm" and Debussy's "Clair de Lune."

Hilton Head audiences will have a chance to hear a selection of songs from the critically acclaimed *Beyond Standard* CD when Hiromi and her Sonicbloom band perform at the Arts Center May 18.

Hailed by the *Philadelphia Inquirer* as "a monster of

a jazz recording," the original compositions and innovative interpretations of standards show off Hiromi's bewildering talent on keyboards. In Gershwin's iconic tune "I Got Rhythm," the precocious pianist's fingers fly across the ivory at breakneck speed creating dense flurries of notes and chords in an explosive jolt of fusion.

Adding to the incredibly magical experience are cutting-edge guitarist Dave Fiuczynski and Berklee chums Tony Grey on bass and Martin Valihora on drums.

Not one to be categorized or labeled, Hiromi's taste in music spans virtually every

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Hiromi Uehara

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genre from Franz Liszt to Sly and the Family Stone.

“I think everyone is great,” Hiromi says. “I really don’t have barriers to any type of music. I could listen to everything from metal to classical music to anything else.”

Her unquenchable thirst for inspiration is surpassed only by her boundless energy. In the first six months of 2009, in addition

to her Hilton Head Island debut, she will travel to Switzerland, the Philippines, Milan, Paris, London and New York.

Wildly entertaining and technically impressive, Hiromi dazzles audiences with a joyful exuberance that’s simply thrilling to behold.

Her appearance is unlike anything else seen from the Savannah Music Festival to Charleston’s Spoleto.