

ALEXANDER ZONJIC

Biography

Alexander Zonjic's musical life is proof that one's true destiny isn't always revealed the minute a youngster picks up his first instrument. Growing up in Windsor, Ontario and excited by all the music of the British invasion, he launched his guitar dreams at age nine and was playing lead guitar in an R&B band in high school. The story goes that at age 21, when Zonjic was home on hiatus from a rock tour, a stranger on the street who had seen him play guitar offered him a flute — most likely stolen — for 50 dollars. Zonjic got it for nine. "I liked how it looked in the case," Zonjic recalls. "I saw mastering it as a challenge and found an immediate passion and all-encompassing desire to play it. I had the nerve to audition with it for the new University of Windsor music program and got in on a probationary basis. That's where I started my classical training."

University instructors soon recognized Zonjic as a gifted student and recruited the second flutist of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra as a teacher for their promising scholar. Upon graduation, Zonjic continued his studies under the tutelage of Ervin Monroe, principle flutist of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. During these years, Zonjic attended school during the day, worked as a rock guitarist by night and even found time to teach others how to play the flute. Over the years, Zonjic has performed with orchestras nationwide, including The Detroit Symphony Orchestra, The Windsor Symphony Orchestra, The Florida Symphony Orchestra and many others. His classical career includes collaborating on three projects with Monroe: *The Classical Album* (1981), The Christmas-themed *Pipers Holiday* (1995) and *Night* (1997).

On the jazz side, while playing at Baker's Keyboard Lounge in Detroit, Zonjic met Bob James, who was so impressed that he asked the young flutist to join his band. The collaboration began a decade's worth of international touring in the '80s, later leading to two recordings in the '90s. His Warner Brothers debut, *Neon* (1990), featured James, and Earl Klugh and was produced by Kirk Whalum. Zonjic's 1993 followup, *Passion*, which featured vocalist Angela Bofill, was an investigation of several musical periods and styles. Zonjic actually began recording in 1978 with an eclectic, self-funded, self-titled project that featured everything from Beatles tunes to jazz standards. Other recordings in his catalog include *Elegant Evening* (1982), *Romance with You* (1984), and *When Is It Real* (1987).

Zonjic joined Heads Up International, a division of Concord Music Group, with the 2001 release of *Reach for the Sky*, a mix of pop songs and original material that explored the various musical influences in his life at that time – including collaborations with Kirk Whalum and Jeff Lorber.

Zonjic reunited with these two old friends – and many others – on *Seldom Blues*, his 2004 release on Heads Up. Other guests and collaborators include Bob James, Angela Bofill,

Earl Klugh, Peter White, labelmate James Lloyd from Pieces of a Dream and many others. The hip-hop-flavored title track takes its name from the Detroit nightclub that Zonjic and a few partners opened in early 2004, but also celebrates the positive vibe that's been moving through the Motor City after decades of socio-economic struggle. Detroit-based vocalist/songwriter/musician Kem, still riding the wave of his highly successful 2002 Motown debut album, helps out with the vocals on "Seldom Blues."

On his June 2009 Heads Up release, Zonjic tips his hat to his adopted city of Detroit. *Doin' The D* features guest appearances by saxophonist Kenny G, trumpeter Rick Braun, Special EFX guitarist Chieli Minucci, vocalist Maysa Leak and others. In addition to the many new faces, keyboardists Jeff Lorber and Bob James – longtime collaborators who have appeared on previous Zonjic recordings – make substantial contributions to *Doin' The D*.

"It's never the same ole same ole," says Zonjic. "I'm always looking forward. I'm always optimistic."

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