

The Turtle Island Quartet's 'Confetti Man' is new and noteworthy



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Courtesy of Turtle Island Quartet [YouTube.com/Bucklesweet Media](https://www.youtube.com/BucklesweetMedia)
Confetti Man (Azica Records, 71296) is the expansive new disc

from the Grammy Award-winning [Turtle Island Quartet](#). The 10-track disc is a brilliant mix of original compositions and arrangements that complement their string virtuosity. As the first string quartet to achieve artistic and commercial success integrating classical music with jazz improvisation, jazz rhythms and comping using extended techniques, the Turtle Island Quartet extends their exploration of this crossover-genre.

The Turtle Island Quartet (TIQ) consists of founding members baritone violinist/violinist David Balakrishnan and cellist Mark Summer now with new members Polish violinist Mateusz Smoczyński, and German violist Benjamin von Gutzeit. Each member either wrote and/or arranged a composition for this program which includes “Confetti Man,” Balakrishnan’s original two-movement suite and his “Alex In A Minor;” Mark Summer’s original rocking concert etude “Pattern Language Julie-O Concert Etude #1” features exceptional solos that mesmerize with their distinct bowing and plucking techniques.

“Confetti Man,” is an iconic fusion of jazz, classical, bluegrass and Indian music that was inspired by a painting done by Balakrishnan’s wife. The two-movement piece "Confetti Mind," and "Guruvayoor" has estastic rock and roll grooves, Indian flavors and sweet, singing string interplay. “Alex In A Minor” is set in the bluegrass/string band genre and features both Balakrishnan and Smoczyński as dueling fiddlers.

“Windspan,” which was written for the TIQ by Bob Mintzer of The Yellowjackets fame, is a great fusion of jazzical music. The ensemble’s sound play unveils the enthralling picture of wind through this delightful musical metaphor. Shimmering string trills, pizzicato and virtuosic bowing by all members captivate the listener from start to finish.

“La Jicotea” written by Paquito D’Rivera for the TIQ is filled with Latin American grooves in odd-time meters that the group combines with modern classical compositional techniques. The strings’ cultivated polyphony examine the aural landscape of this lovely song through enlightened pizzicato, the cellist’s bow and

slap technique and simultaneous pyrotechnical display based on their trademark technique.

Keeping with that tradition, the Turtle Island Quartet reimagines Wayne Shorter's "Infant Eyes" (arranged by Benjamin von Gutzeit), John Carisi's "Israel" (arranged by David Balakrishnan), and Bud Powell's "Bouncin' with Bud" (arranged by Mateusz Smoczynski). The Quartet delivers these gems and their connections to the European classical tradition with intimate, intelligent and passionate concern for the future of the composers' music as jazz standards. However, these new renditions open portals to an aural world where imaginative music resides and affords the listener with considerable freedom to listen to these jazz gems in another way.

The Turtle Island Quartet's longtime collaborating vocalist Nellie McKay captures the beauty and underlying zany sound for which she is known on the Burt Bacharach/Hal David classic "Send Me No Flowers." McKay also lends her talents as a ukulele player in keeping with the 'cool jazz' phrasing style and makes this song delightful to listen to.

Overall, *Confetti Man* is an exemplary selection of jazzical (jazz/classical fusion) music that you will enjoy from start to finish.