

For Tomorrow - Newark Star Ledger – November 5, 2006, by Zan Stewart

Up-and-coming NYC-based pianist Zak offers a first-rate program, working with dynamic bassist Paul Gill and zesty drummer Willie Jones III. Zak's flowing original, "The Cream Or The Clear," demonstrates his ace style: a clean, warm sound, and crisp execution of on-the-money ideas that swing—often with a provocative verve. This music has a very current heft, despite its roots in the jazz tradition. Zak's speedy blues, "Bran Flake," boasts altered changes and no shortage of song-like remarks from the composer; Jones adds a tantalizing array of percussion thoughts. Wayne Shorter's "This Is for Albert" is given a dancing, driving exposition, as is Larry Young's vibrant "Plaza de Toros" with its percolating groove. Duke Pearson's ballad, "You Know I Care," is played emotively by Zak and company. Bud Powell's "Strictly Confidential" is a smooth swinger featuring a Gill solo of cleanly picked ideas full of melodic and rhythmic juice. Three and one-half stars out of four.