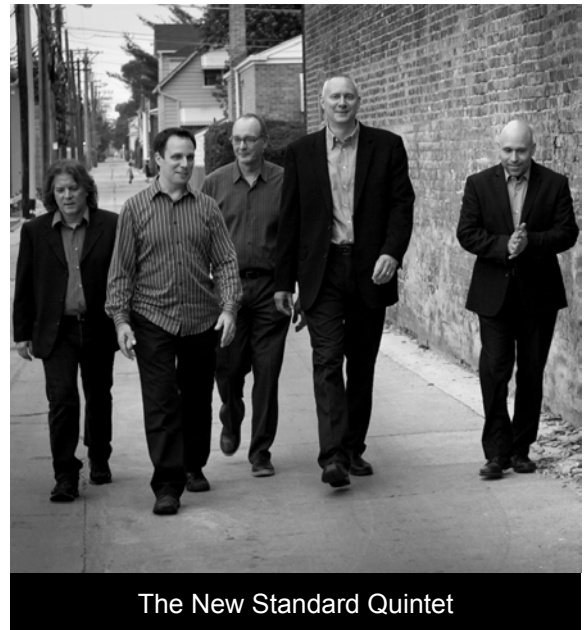


# NEW STANDARD QUINTET

The **New Standard Quintet** is a dynamic and versatile jazz ensemble based in Chicago. Comprised of 5 veterans of the vibrant Chicago music scene, the **NSQ** provides a truly unique musical experience with each performance. A group difficult to categorize, one of the main hallmarks of the **NSQ** is its diverse repertoire. The original design of the **NSQ** by its leader, saxophonist Ken Partyka, was to modernize traditional standards and to bring material from the world of popular music into the jazz idiom.

In 2011, the quintet released its debut CD, the self produced *The Many Faces*. In an ironic twist, the group strayed from its original concept and recorded all original material. Following a successful CD release performance at the legendary Fitzgerald's, an event sponsored by WDCB 90.9FM, *The Many Faces* has received strong reviews and radio play, including a mark of 3.5 stars from *DownBeat Magazine* and the quintet has performed throughout the Chicago area building its fan base.



The New Standard Quintet

The musicians of the **New Standard Quintet** are as diverse as the music they perform. In addition to Ken Partyka on saxophone, the personnel of the quintet consists of bassist Curt Bley, guitarist Pat Fleming, pianist Tom Vaitas and drummer Todd Howell. Each of these musicians boasts an impressive performance resume. Members of the **NSQ** have performed at the Montreaux, Chicago, South Shore and Elkhart jazz festivals as well as the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival and have recorded and performed with a "who's who" of Chicago and national talent, including Howard Levy, Sonia Dada, Frank Mantooth, Rob Parton, Frank D'Rone, Von Freeman, Hal Russell, George Benson, Herb Ellis and even the Lieutenant Dan Band.

Shifting gears through the different forms of jazz with ease, all while maintaining musical integrity, has helped define the **NSQ**. A typical set of the group can include the music of such varied artists as John Coltrane, The Beatles, Duke Ellington, Stevie Wonder and The Meters. And in addition to this unique catalog of material, the **NSQ** has the ability to become several "bands within a band". A set of the **NSQ** can shift from the full group to duo, trio and quartet, shaping the sonic experience as much as possible for their audiences.

From straight ahead swing to bebop, funk, latin and fusion, the **New Standard Quintet** represents a fresh sound and a new concept to the performance of jazz.

# NEW STANDARD QUINTET



## New Standard Quintet

### *The Many Faces*

NEW STANDARD MUSIC

★ ★ ★ ½

The “faces” cited in the title of this debut from Chicago-based New Standard Quintet refer to the multitude of sounds the group explores on a program of original music by saxophonist/leader Ken Partyka and guitarist Pat Fleming.

This band has a way of sounding right at home on a wide range of material, whether it’s a slow, lazy swinger (“Mirror, Mirror”), bossa nova (“A Voz Doce”), grooving hardbopper (“In The Kitchen”), or harmonically challenging modern-leaning adventure (“Uncertainty Principle”). It stands as a testament to the restrained maturity of each of these fine instrumentalists, their cohesiveness as a group and the rich compositions they embrace. These guys aren’t out to impress listeners with extreme statements; rather, they strive for artistic excellence and meaningful interplay.

The quintet integrates traditional and contemporary elements to create a group sound that is defined by both acoustic and electric instruments in the keyboard, guitar and bass roles. It all depends on what’s appropriate given the compositional context of each tune.

The Many Faces has an undertone of quiet confidence that guides the listener through the unexpected melodic turns and subtly shifting syncopation of its deceptively advanced compositions. —*Ed Enright*

“Although their new CD is named after one of their tunes, The Many Faces could be used to describe the group’s versatility. Throughout the nine songs they perform on this CD, the New Standard Quintet sounds quite at home performing in a wide variety of styles, and their blend during ensembles is consistently impressive.....Even with all of the overlapping styles and approaches that they utilize, the New Standard Quintet displays their own musical personality in each setting, showing their mastery in many modern jazz styles....”

— **Scott Yanow**, author of ten books including *Bebop*, *Trumpet Kings* and *The Jazz Singers*

“New Standard Quintet lives up to its name, time and again, not by resurrecting age-old tracks but by trying to fashion its own rules for approaching original jazz music. Almost to a fault, the Chicago-based group gives the slip to the clichés that sink this age-old form, making The Many Faces a ride that’s as inviting as it is intriguing. New Standard Quintet has an edge, but it’s not a serrated one....Once again, New Standard Quintet finds a way to defy expectations”

— **Nick DeRiso** *Something Else Reviews*

“You can tell by the rapport and intimacy of this recording that the guys in The New Standard Quintet are committed to making seriously beautiful music together. This group is made up of some of Chicago’s finest musicians and is very cohesive with a distinct sound. There are shades and colors that show off different facets of this music’s history. ”

— **Mark Colby** from the liner notes to *The Many Faces*



*The Many Faces CD (2011)*

# NEW STANDARD QUINTET



Chicago Saxophonist **Ken Partyka** enjoys a multi-faceted career in the music business, which spans over twenty years. In his unique career, he has amassed an impressive resume as a performer, educator, bandleader and composer/arranger as well as being integrally involved with the retail music industry.

As owner of **New Standard Music, Inc.**, a company that specializes in providing live jazz for private events and public performance, Ken has contracted dozens of events ranging from solo piano to big band. Ken also leads the **New Standard Quintet**, which recently released its debut CD "The Many Faces". Ken served as producer and contributed 4 original songs to the project.

Known for his versatility and musicianship, Ken is in demand in a number of idioms, including jazz, big band and also in more commercial settings. In addition to leading the **New Standard Quintet**, Ken is also a busy freelance performer and is currently the lead alto saxophonist with the renowned Rob Parton Big Band .

Over his career, Ken has backed up or recorded with such acclaimed performers as Mel Torme, Arturo Sandoval, Freddie Cole, Ron Hawking and Frank D'Rone. He has recorded on numerous commercially released CDs, most notably with the band Sonia Dada, to which he contributed many horn section arrangements. As a member of various ensembles, Ken has performed at some of the largest venues in the country, including the Chicago Jazz Festival, the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival and the legendary Red Rock.

Ken is also in demand as a clinician, adjudicator and guest artist, having appeared with junior high, high school, college and municipal bands, including the Notre Dame University Lab Band and the Ferry Hg Big Band in Gmunden, Austria.

Currently, Ken serves as the Director of Procurement & Distribution at Quinlan & Fabish Music, the Chicago area's largest school music dealer.

\*Ken Partyka is a Reunion Blues Artist



A promotional poster for Reunion Blues Chicago Jazz &amp; Blues. The poster has a dark blue background with a faint saxophone graphic. At the top, it says "REUNION BLUES CELEBRATES CHICAGO JAZZ &amp; BLUES" in large, bold, yellow letters. To the right, there is a logo for "OFFICIAL ARTISTS Reunion Blues" and a website address "www.reunionblues.com". Below the main text, there are three circular portraits of musicians: Ken Partyka, Buddy Guy, and Frank Catalano. Next to each portrait is their name and a Reunion Blues product: "RE Continental Alto Sax Case" for Ken Partyka, "RE Continental Guitar Case" for Buddy Guy, and "RE Classic Leather Soprano Sax Case" for Frank Catalano.



# NEW STANDARD QUINTET



## Pat Fleming

Pat Fleming has embraced many types of music, making him well versed in Jazz, Rock, Blues, Folk and Balkan styles. He made his first professional performance at age 12, and spent his formative years studying with David Bloom, Jack Cecchini and John Abercrombie. His skill and versatility have made for a career of diversity and range.

In the 1980s, Pat was a member of two of Chicago's most innovative and avant garde bands, D-Section and The Balkan Rhythm Band. In 1990, Pat toured the nation playing concerts and on television with the Fareed Haque Quartet. This same ensemble opened for Sting at the prestigious Montreaux Jazz Festival in Switzerland in 1991.

In 2005, Pat was asked to participate in the New York City workshop of a new musical being written by mystery writer Stephen King and rock musician John Mellencamp. Pat was one of four musicians on this project, entitled "The Ghost Brothers of Darkland County".

Currently, Pat is busy performing and recording with Howard Levy's Acoustic Express Quartet, who would occasionally appear with legendary jazz violinist, the late Johnny Frigo. Held in high regard by his peers, Pat has produced, arranged for and performed on countless projects and albums.

A sought after educator, Pat has taught guitar at many learning institutions over the years, among them Columbia College and the Bloom School of Jazz. Pat also works with Howard Levy at the Outer Banks Music Seminars.

## Tom Vaitzas

Tom Vaitzas is one of the most sought after pianists in the city of Chicago. Known for his tremendous feel and sensitivity, Tom's talent is held in high regard among fellow musicians. A frequent collaborator, Tom's playing and arranging can be heard on a multitude of commercial recordings covering a wide range of styles.

A recipient of both a BA in music performance and a minor in music education from Northern Illinois University, Tom also earned a less formal, but extremely vital jazz education on Chicago's south side. He became a regular at jam sessions held by legendary saxophonist Von Freeman at the New Apartment Lounge. Tom has even played with Freeman's group, an honor bestowed upon few.

Not only a favorite of his peers, Tom has become a favorite of some of Chicago's most veteran performers, including trumpeter Bob Perna, vocalists Frank D'Rone and Bobbi Wilsyn, Duke Payne and Red Holt. He has toured Europe with blues artist Lurie Bell and has been a mainstay on the dinner cruise ship The Odyssey for 15 years.

In addition to his strong jazz and blues roots, Tom has also spent a great deal of time pursuing his interest in Greek music. This added ingredient to his already diverse range is yet one more reason his playing is so unique and in demand.

As a member of The New Standard Quartet, Tom pulls double duty playing both the keyboard parts as well as the bass parts. This "two-in-one" feature is one of the main attributes on which the group's versatility is built.



# NEW STANDARD QUINTET



## **Todd Howell**

Todd has been a professional drummer and educator in Chicago for over 15 years. He received his Bachelor's in music from Northern Illinois University. Since then he has performed with many of the city's top jazz artists such as Ryan Cohan, Ron Perrillo, Bobby Broom, The Chicago Jazz Orchestra, vocalist Kimberly Gordon and with internationally known jazz luminaries such as Bob Mintzer and Brian Lynch.

He has also recorded with artists such as Fareed Haque, Juli Wood, Jeff Morrison and guitarist Kyle Asche's acclaimed debut recording 'The Hook Up' on Origin Records.

He currently teaches at Chicago area schools including Lemont High School, St. Francis College Prep in Wheaton, and Elmhurst College.

## **Curt Bley**

Bassist Curt Bley has been a fixture in the Chicago music scene for 30 years. A keen listener of many idioms of music, Curt is adept in any musical situation. Skilled on both acoustic and electric basses, Curt has appeared or recorded with a diverse array of artists, crossing the traditional boundaries of music with ease.

Among the artists with whom Curt has either performed or recorded are George Benson, Herb Ellis, Dweezil Zappa, Kevin Matthews, Howard Levy, Hal Russell's NRG Ensemble, Fred Simon, Paul Wertico, the Fifth Dimension, Frank Mantooth, Som Brasil, Don Stiernberg, John Campbell, Mark Colby, and the Steakhouse Mints. He vows that he is not done yet.



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