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In Music

Hanrahan's new disc travels between live and studio settings



By **Bobby Tanzilo**  
Managing Editor

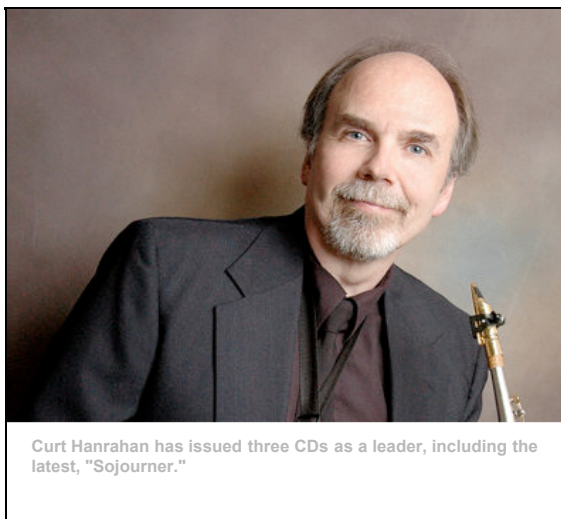
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Published April 24, 2011 at 1:02 p.m.

Curt Hanrahan is a fixture on the Milwaukee jazz scene, where he leads a group, has worked alongside countless greats -- from the city and from far beyond -- and teaches saxophone and directs the jazz program at UW-Milwaukee.

He is also leader of the new Milwaukee Jazz Orchestra which performed two weeks ago at UWM with Jon Faddis.



Curt Hanrahan has issued three CDs as a leader, including the latest, "Sojourner."

In addition to issuing three discs as a leader -- the latest is "Souljourner" on Chicago's Blujazz Productions -- Hanrahan boasts a resume that reads like a musical who's who.

He has played with Ray Charles, Johnny Mathis, Tony Bennett, Rosemary Clooney, Cab Calloway, Aretha Franklin, Diane Schurr, Bobby Caldwell, the Manhattan Transfer, the Temptations, the Four Tops, Arturo Sandoval, Nelson Riddle, Frank Sinatra Jr., the Jimmy Dorsey and Tommy Dorsey Orchestras, the Doc Severinsen Big Band, Jan Garber and Harry Connick Jr.

You may also have unknowingly heard Hanrahan play with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, Fireside Theater, Skylight Theater and with touring shows like "West Side Story," "Hairspray," "Spamalot," "The Color Purple," "Dreamgirls," "Legally Blonde" and "Little Shop of Horrors."

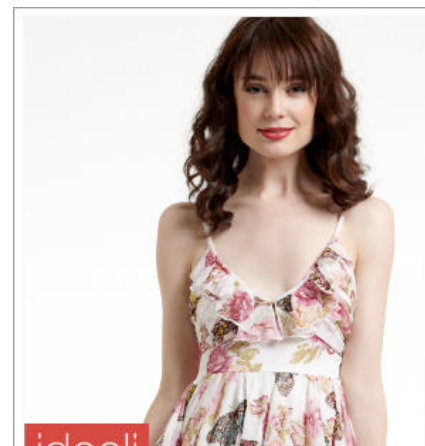
We talked to Hanrahan about "Souljourner," which features two Hanrahan originals, two more written by guitarist Jay Mollerskov and a trio of



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standards, of which Hanrahan says, "the three standards ... were included because of their complete balance structure, melodically and harmonically. They fit the intent of the original compositions and create an overall arc on the CD."

The disc -- which also features drummer Dave Wall and bassist Tim Hanrahan -- was recorded live at Caroline's Jazz Club and the UWM Recital Hall in 2010. "A Child Is Born" was recorded at Dave Vartanian's Shorewood studio 14 years earlier.

OnMilwaukee.com: Tell us a bit about making the record. Did you record the dates at Caroline's and UWM knowing you'd make the disc or did the disc grow out of having made those great recordings?

Curt Hanrahan: I wanted to do a mix of live and studio recordings with the group. I wanted to catch the ambience of the recital hall at UWM using the grand piano, and the live version was to create music in the moment without the usual studio enhancements.

OMC: How does the DV track fit in?

CH: The DV track was used because of its close relationship to the live Thad Jones composition, and it gives the Thad tunes a feeling of timelessness.

OMC: Is the group on the disc your regular working group?

CH: The group on the CD is the regular working group, and I like to add special musical guests on all of my gigs.

OMC: How many CDs have you released as a leader?

CH: I have released three CDs: "Hangtime" on the now-defunct J-Bird label, Curt Hanrahan Septet "To Be Again," (on) Blujazz label, and the most recent, "Souljourner," also on Blujazz.

OMC: What's your sense of the jazz scene in the city at the moment? Does it feel like it's surging a little right now?

CH: Yes, with the new Milwaukee Jazz Vision Web site and the interest of the local jazz musicians to support each other and be a collective has helped tremendously raise the level of consciousness of the Milwaukee public.

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