

A portrait of Alan King, a Black man with a beard and glasses, looking slightly to the side. The background is dark with blue light effects. At the bottom, a close-up of a piano keyboard is visible, also with blue light effects.

ALAN KING

KEYBOARDIST

PERCUSSIONIST

PRODUCER

COMPOSER

Perfectly embodying the innate joys and creative freedom of being an independent artist, Alan King captures the exciting diversity and spontaneity of his long awaited solo album debut with a simple two word title: **The Experiment**. Transcending the traditional limits of the contemporary urban jazz genre, the Maryland based, multi-talented composer, keyboardist and percussionist sets his bright and sensuous melodies to a wide variety of rhythms and grooves, from in the pocket "smooth jazz" to pop/R&B, high energy Brazilian jazz and classic old school soul-jazz.

While King's passion for percussion translates to a lot of deep pocket rhythms, his production also includes dazzling horn textures and, on retro flavored tunes like "Going Nowhere Fast," the unmistakably cool sound of the Fender Rhodes. He complements his nine originals with a sensuous, romantic cover of "Say Yes," originally recorded by Lakeside in 2007.

Those who detect the influence of contemporary jazz keyboard greats like Brian Culbertson and Bob James are right on the money. King began focusing on writing and performing jazz after his jazz loving father, Alan King, Sr., took him to see Culbertson perform in the mid-90s. He began seeing the potential for cultivating his own keyboard-based sound after hearing Bob James perform with the supergroup Fourplay.

Although he uses a dynamic array of sounds in his synth arsenal, his love for the live ensemble playing of Brazilian bands inspired him to record *The Experiment* live in the studio with some of the D.C. area's top local musicians. King has done promotional appearances for the album on the D.C. community based jazz station WPFW 89.3 FM and TalkingSmoothJazz.com. He formed his own label, KMG Records, for the release of his debut, but plans to sign new artists in the future.

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ON STAGE

Alan has a long and colorful history of performing as both keyboardist and percussionist in the Washington, DC area, which includes shows at the Taste of DC Festival and the neoclassically designed Meridian Hill Park, better known to the natives as Malcolm X Park. Among the venues that King has played are The Panorama Room in SE DC, The Getaway Lounge in Waldorf, Maryland and the National Democratic Club in SW DC, where he has entertained senators and congressmen. One of the highlights of his highly interactive show is when he straps on the portable Roland Ax-Synth and plays keyboards while walking through the audience.

NOTABLE PERFORMANCES

Panorama Room - *Washington, DC*

National Democratic Club - *Washington, DC*

Get Away Lounge - *Waldorf, MD*

Library Bar & Grill - *Washington, DC*

Morgan's - *Columbia, MD*

The Latin Palace - *Baltimore, MD*



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MUSIC

The **Experiment** gets off to a supremely funky start with the bright synth-horns driven hook of “B-Love,” which grooves into a lively and percussive keyboard melody; Rick Peralta’s vibrant electric guitar solo adds a crackling energy to the up-tempo vibe. King opens his heart and lets the listener into the romantic side of his artistry on the dreamy and sensual “Cloud 9,” whose lush keyboard melody is ultimately enhanced by soaring orchestral-flavored atmospheres and snazzy horn textures. KJ Dennis provides the irresistible, high register Phillip Bailey-styled lead vocals on a moody cover of Lakeside’s “Say Yes,” to which King adds the retro touches of a Fender Rhodes harmony line and spacey synth sounds. “Going Nowhere Fast,” inspired by a crazy driver darting in and out of lanes during slow moving rush hour traffic, leans away from the urban smooth and into a classic old school soul-jazz fusion vibe, complete with Rhodes, exotic percussion textures and a jam section featuring King’s percussion and Tommy Ziegler’s slamming bass.

King pairs his gentle keyboard melody with Tommy Ziegler’s silky soprano on the slow burning “Me and You,” then parties hard on the explosive, hard grooving Brazilian samba jam “My First Time In Rio”; the fiery tune features Peralta’s playful acoustic guitar and a spirited jazz trumpet solo by De’Andre Shaifer. Back down-tempo, vocalist Tamika Jones takes the lead on the passionate ballad “Let It Ring (I Love It),” while “An Unforgettable Day” finds King waxing nostalgic and slightly melancholy, reflecting via a gentle keyboard melody over haunting harmony chords. Shaifer’s moody trumpet is the perfect foil for King’s artful melodic keys on the soulful and cool “Twist of Lime.” King closes the set with the title track, a true “Experiment” featuring a fiery, high energy jazzy keyboard melody, rising horns and a rolling, party all night long groove.

REVIEWS

“Maybe it’s a sign of the times that a supremely adventurous keyboard-driven recording like Alan King’s needs to be called ‘The Experiment.’ Sure, it takes risks, but that’s what great jazz is supposed to do—surprise us, take us in unexpected directions, engage us with spontaneous bursts of uniqueness that rise above the kinds of stuff we’re used to hearing. King does all this with a gloriously inventive mix of in the melodic pocket smooth urban jazz, retro soul-jazz magnificence (can’t beat that Fender Rhodes) and energizing splashes of Brazilian jazz that showcase his equal passion for all things percussive. Like his chief influences Brian Culbertson and Bob James, he is at once melodic, funky and mainstream, while able to stretch and challenge his listeners eager for something new and fresh.”

— Jonathan Widran, *Wine and Jazz*

“The swinging and sexy sounds of pianist Alan King hail a great debut by a new major talent in contemporary jazz. King, who also plays percussion, combines fresh original tunes – Brazilian, old-school, ballads and sparkling R&B vocals – to make a strong statement about compelling and lively listening done right.”

— Brian Soergel, *JazzTimes/Smooth Jazz News*

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FROM THE BEGINNING

Alan King's earliest jazz impressions were inspired by a childhood home filled with the music from his mother's extensive record collection, which included Phyllis Hyman, Donny Hathaway, Earth Wind and Fire, Ray Charles etc. Inspired by her son's interest in music, Mrs. Willette King started Alan at an early age on piano lessons, which were later followed by Latin and African percussion lessons taught by M. Nyasuma.

King was hired by DC Artworks to teach young people music, which led to performances at the 1991 Taste of DC festival, Fletcher Johnson SHS as well as performing at the neoclassical designed Meridian Hill Park, better known to the natives as Malcolm X Park. The keyboardist has a love for teaching his craft and for youth; his future plans include implementing a music program designed specifically for young adults. King flourished in the vibrant cultural scene of Washington, D.C., playing the piano with the house band at the Foxxtap (formerly known as Zanzibar) at the waterfront. He later played the roto-toms, timbales and congas with Washington's Pure Elegance, a Go-Go band in the city where "go-go" music originated and was made famous.

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