

Go There ...Edgy, Provocative Groove.

Press/Reviews

AllAboutJazz.com/John Barron; January 1, 2008

Scott Sawyer "Go There"

This story originally appeared online here: <http://www.allaboutjazz.com/php/article.php?id=27981>

Guitarist Scott Sawyer is the kind of musician who displays his musical diversity like a badge of honor. The North Carolinian, who is probably best known for his work with vocalist Nnenna Freelon, showcases his electrified playing and composing on *Go There*, a dynamic release featuring drummer Kenny Soule, bassists Oteil Burbridge and Ron Brendle, organist/flutist Kofi Burbridge—Oteil's older brother—and percussionist Chris Garges.

The disc opens with a funky-out arrangement of George Harrison's "Taxman," a raucous introduction to Sawyer's tastefully charged-up style. "5-Spot" and "Royal Canal" both have a laid back groove reminiscent of John Scofield with Medeski, Martin and Wood. The latter features a greasy organ solo by Kofi, a hard-hitting upright pulse from Brendle and a barrage of overdriven, inventive ideas from Sawyer. The guitarist demonstrates melodic flexibility on the soulful "Slow Dance," a pleasingly ethereal waltz, and "In the Stream," where effects manipulation thoughtfully takes center stage. A straight-up backbeat compliments Sawyer's angular theme on "AR." The extended vamp is the perfect vehicle for Oteil to stretch out with a blistering solo. The veteran bassist (Allman Brothers, Aquarium Rescue Unit) carefully unveils his monster chops for the better good of the groove. Soule, a long-time musical comrade of Sawyer, keeps things moving with fat, in-the-pocket support. His meaty, never-in-the-way drumming elevates funkier tracks like "Going...Going...Gone" and "Go Home," the session's blues-drenched closer.

A talent deserving of wider recognition, Sawyer is a guitarist of varying persuasion who will undoubtedly appeal to fans of groove-oriented experimentation. With exceptional performances and inspired compositions, *Go There* is a first-rate, soulful good time.

N&O/Owen Cordle; May 2007

Scott Sawyer, "Go There" - 3 1/2 Stars

This story originally appeared in the News & Observer (Raleigh) on May 6, 2007 AND online here: <http://www.newsobserver.com/105/story/571286.html>

If you know Raleigh guitarist Scott Sawyer from only his jazz gigs and tours with jazz singer Nnenna Freelon, "Go There" (Doll) opens a different door. Welcome to Scott Sawyer, the funk, rock, blues -- and jazz -- player. A comparison might be made to guitarists John Scofield and Bill Frisell, who also cast a wide net.

With a preponderance of Sawyer tunes, the album is all groove underneath. Drummer Kenny Soule locks in with the Burbridge brothers -- electric bassist Oteil from the Allman Brothers band and organist and flutist Kofi from the Derek Trucks band -- to produce the hippest of backbeats and syncopation. Acoustic bassist Ron Brendle spells Oteil on the slow, bluesy "Slow Down, Freight Train," and there's a hint of mystery in Sawyer's chords and amplifier effects -- but the groove remains righteous.

As enticing as the beat is, there is also a fine sense of proportion in the ensemble dynamics (check the powerful buildup of the 10-minute "I Wish You Would") and solo pacing. On the bona fide slow blues "Go Home," Sawyer takes the less-is-more solo approach, but even on more open-ended tunes, he

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remains focused and to the point.

The tone of the group is always just right. Soule's drum sound exudes funk. Oteil's bass, ranging from slinky ostinato figures to bubbling Jaco Pastorius-like solo runs, matches Kofi's organ colors and strategically placed entrances and hits. Kofi's flute is also used to good effect on "I Wish You Would" and the "Caravan"-like "Dark Lady."

If you're looking for a pure, hard-line jazz album, this is not it. But if you think it represents a compromise, think again. It's its own species.

Jambands.com; 8/25/07

http://jambands.com/News.phtml?newsfile=redesign_news334.html#8-24-21

In his [current Jambands.com interview](#), Oteil Burbridge describes a disc he recorded late last year along with his brother, Derek Trucks Band keyboardist, Kofi Burbridge.

"We just completed a project called Go There. Just ridiculous, man—they are out of Raleigh, North Carolina. They have a guitarist, Scott Sawyer and a drummer Kenny Soule that lives in New York. I've done so many of these all-star jams sort of things over the years with all of these different people together because of their names and, you know, sometimes it is fun but it is not necessarily guaranteed that you will have some really intense chemistry. We went into the studio and did this and I felt like we had been playing together for thirty years. It was just amazing how natural it was. It's funny because people who have heard it are starting to e-mail me and say, "Holy crap, this sounds really good!" It makes me feel good."

Interview: Oteil Burbridge; 06-05-07

www.badassbassplayers.com excerpted from complete interview:

Q: 1999's "Stranger's Hand" album with Howard Levy, Jerry Goodman, and Steve Smith, was an amazing mix of musical voices. Any other multiple collaboration projects planned?

A: I'm really trying hard to keep the extra curricular stuff to a minimum. I did do one CD with this great guitarist named Scott Sawyer. It's called "GO THERE". My brother Kofi played on it and a great drummer named Kenny Soule. These guys are really amazing. I usually don't have or make time for other projects but this one was so cool I had to do it. It turned out really great too. That CD is out now so GO GET IT.

Q: Are there any set routines you go through to get ready for a gig/session, or do you prepare differently for each role?

A: Not really. I just try to not eat too much before a gig and I usually have a glass of wine for the nerves. I really hate the studio and try to avoid it as much as possible. The GO THERE session was the first time I really had lots of fun in the studio.

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Hittin' The Note Issue 52/Michael Wynch

Scott Sawyer - Go There

Guitarist Scott Sawyer has been active on the NC jazz scene for the last 20 years, but his musical roots are rock and blues. With a little help from some very talented friends, Scott has released *Go There*, a wonderful collection of 11 instrumentals that capture the full range of his abilities.

Scott's playing is a blend of Jack Pearson's nimble touch and Ronnie Earl's warm tone, and both are displayed throughout. With the Burbridge Brothers backing him – Oteil on bass, Kofi on B-3 organ and flute – *Go There* flows nicely from one track to the next.

The album opens with the riff-filled "Going...Going...Gone", complete with Scott's edgy fretwork, a nice organ run by Kofi, and Kenny Soule's backbeat holding it all together. George Harrison's "Taxman" receives an interesting interpretation, which starts with some tasteful organ swells and Oteil's brooding bass line, before giving way to Scott's ascending solo and nice wah-wah effects. "Slow Dance" is a somber blues tune, "In The Stream" flows out of the speakers, and "Slow Down, Freight Train" evokes a smoky jazz club after midnight. On "I Wish You Would", Scott tips his hat to John McLaughlin, and the band follows Oteil's thumping bass through the Middle-Eastern flavored "Dark Lady" before the powerful blues-rocker "Go Home" closes things out with a flourish.

Scott Sawyer is a major talent, and if *Go There* is any indication, he and his band will soon make a name for themselves well beyond North Carolina.

Guitar Man Scott Sawyer

Metro Magazine (Raleigh), March 2007 By Philip van Vleck

(complete article appeared here: <http://www.metronc.com/article/?id=1292>)

Scott Sawyer is one of North Carolina's guitar masters. Jazz-wise enough to back Durham-based vocalist Nnenna Freelon on several national and international tours, yet nasty enough to handle the lead guitar chores for Mel Melton & The Wicked Mojos. And, of course, between 1999 and 2004 Sawyer teamed with Kenny Soule and Bobby Patterson — late of Dag — to form Go There, a trio with a finely honed jazz fusion thing.

Sawyer is set to release a new album this month — *Go There* — and the feel of the tunes, while referencing both blues and jazz, is neither. The album is, indeed, a revisiting of Sawyer and Soule's *Go There* band project, inspired, according to Sawyer, by Soule. In describing his new disc, Sawyer noted first that it's an instrumental outing: "To me it's not a jazz record, but some people might consider it a jazz record because it has a lot of improvisation," Sawyer allowed. "It doesn't swing in the traditional sense, however; it's more groove oriented. As you know, I have a blues background, and you'll definitely hear that on the album. I really don't know what to call it. It's somewhere in between jam band, jazz, funk, rock and blues. I'll leave it up to the listener to decide."

To this listener, *Go There* sounds like a righteous amalgam of jazz, funk, rock and blues performed by a crew of very solid players. For immediate inspiration, check the brilliant, funkified arrangement of George Harrison's "Tax Man." Also note the 12-minute tour-de-force "I Wish You Would" and the blues "Slow Down, Freight Train."

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The crucial thing with Go There is the musicianship. Everyone is simply outstanding. In addition to Soule's pivotal contribution on drums and ideas, Sawyer noted that: "I had two bass players: Ron Brendle played acoustic bass on three songs and Oteil Burbridge played electric bass on the rest of the tunes. Kofi Burbridge, Oteil's brother, played Hammond B-3 on 10 of the 11 tunes, and he also played some flute."

Many rock fans will recognize Kofi for his role with the Derek Trucks Band. His brother, Oteil, is well known to fans of The Allman Brothers Band, as well as those who follow his band Oteil & The Peacemakers. Oteil is something of a bass-playing icon. Sawyer scored a major coup in snagging him for Go There.

Asked how long it took to record Go There, Sawyer smiled and replied: "It depends on what you mean. I guess it goes back to the first time I ever did a project like this, which was the original Go There trio — Bobby Patterson, Kenny Soule and me — back in 1999. In terms of actually making this record, it took three days in the studio, start to finish, with no rehearsal ahead of time. It was pretty intense."

REVIEW-- Featured Artist: Scott Sawyer @ jazzreview.com by Thomas R. Erdmann

(complete article appeared here: <http://www.jazzreview.com/cd/review-18892.html>)

...A better moniker for this excellent recording would be "The Scott Sawyer Blues Band," for it is the spirit of the blues that influences and percolates throughout. Some of the tunes are overtly blues derived. "Slow Dance," for example, is intentionally in the slow-blues-drag style. With a stripped down unit of just guitar, bass and drums, with flute only appearing during the solo section, everyone leaves their six-shooters at home and plays in support of a truly poignant feeling. Kofi (Burbridge), who demonstrates a real feel for nuance and shades of color when on organ, proves to be a great flutist during his solo and trading licks sections. He's so soulful he could make a specter cry.

The up-tempo "AR" rocks on. With a groove that is locked in the pocket, Sawyer turns in his most inspired solo of the recording. It's not just the fact he has technique to burn, it's how he uses that technique in tandem with Burbridge to get to the song's heart in as direct a manner as possible. Kofi's great organ solo, he lays down some lines that can only be described as righteous, follows the two string players' work, before Sawyer re-enters to drive the piece home.

The ensemble's take on George Harrison's "Taxman" demonstrates just how much more music there is still to be mined from The Beatles catalog and "Slow Down, Freight Train" picks right up where "Slow Dance" left off, but this time it's Sawyer who gets down and dirty. Playing flatted thirds and sevenths may be the vehicle, but it's in the delivery where artists are defined. Holding back behind the beat just enough to capture the right emotion, Sawyer demonstrates a real feel for statement and anti-statement. This disc is highly recommended for all blues aficionados.
