

# The New York Times

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★ **ROBERT STILLMAN'S KALIFACTORS, EIVIND OPSVIK'S OVERSEAS**, Cornelia Street Cafe, 29 Cornelia Street, Greenwich Village, (212) 989-9319. A little showcase for the Barcelona-based Fresh Sound jazz label, featuring two New York-based groups. Kalifactors, led by the pianist Albert Sanz and the saxophonist Robert Stillman, moves warily and wittily, more or less doing away with the mainstream jazz harmony and structure of the 1960's; Mr. Opsvik, a bassist, writes tunes full of incredibly catchy little ideas. These young bands are two suggestions of where jazz students are looking. Tomorrow night at 9; call for cover charge (Ratliff).

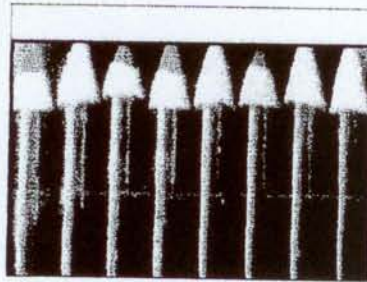
the village  
**VOICE**

VOICE CHOICES

 **nightguide**

thursday, september 18

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Sat 9/20 9:00 PM

Cornelia Street Cafe  
29 Cornelia, Manhattan

Phone: 212-989-9319

[venue detail](#) [map](#)

## Kalifactors

his quartet's gripping, with tranquil ballads and intimate vocabularies doused in truckloads of jazz sumptuousness. It's all about patience for keyboardist Albert Sanz, who injects vinegar at every turn. Simply, he's gigantic, with Monk's edges, Bill Evans's colors. Highlights also include Robert Stillman's gripping narratives and shrewd textures. Always astonishing. The Overseas band complete this Fresh Sound/New Talent showcase. (King)



Review Courtesy [AllAboutJazz.com](http://AllAboutJazz.com)

## An Introduction to Kalifactors

Kalifactors | Fresh Sound New Talent



**Track Listing:** Where Am I?, Kalifactors, Bus, The Magician, The Rhumba, Un Ultimo Esfuerzo, A.M. 5:31

**Personnel:** Albert Sanz, piano; Robert Stillman, tenor sax; Chris Van Voorst Van Beest, bass; Kendrick Scott, drums

For a crew this young—average age 24—the Kalifactors have put together an impressive debut. *An Introduction to Kalifactors* showcases the talents of four musicians in the middle of their (formal) musical educations at Berklee and The New England Conservatory.

The sax/piano/bass/drums quartet offers up a set of engaging originals in the mainstream jazz tradition. The opener, "Where Am I?", is jaunty and dark at the same time, with saxophonist Robert Stillman blowing a cool Stan Getz tone in front of a crisp rhythm. The band did a three week tour of Spain in November 2001, just a few months before this recording, and they obviously gelled into a tight, crisp unit.

On the ballad "The Magician," pianist Albert Sanz enters into a delicate Bill Evans mode; and the mid-tempo "The Rhumba" slides into a sinuous groove, with piano and drums engaged in a point/counterpoint conversation. "Un Ultimo Esfuerzo" features Stillman's stretched-out lines up against pianist Sanz in an angular, percussive mood.

These are talented musicians and fine songwriters, but I would love to have heard them tackle a standard, or—considering their ages—something from the rock world, *a la* the much-hyped Bad Plus or Dave Douglas.

A solid debut. We'll be hearing more from The Kalifactors.

Visit [www.freshsoundrecordings.com](http://www.freshsoundrecordings.com)

~ [Dan McClenaghan](http://DanMcClenaghan.com)

## Kalifactors keep up jazz beat with international flavor

By STEVE FEENEY

The AprilFest jazz series has primarily focused, in the two years of its existence, on bringing national and international artists to perform on Portland stages.

With a Spanish pianist and a new CD out on a respected label, the group Kalifactors certainly fills that bill. But, with half of the quartet's members hailing from Maine, it's also a band about which the hometown folks can get particularly excited.

A prominent member of the band is Portland's own Robert Stillman. Tenor saxophonist Stillman has popped up from time to time on local stages over the last dozen or so years.

No longer the gangly teenager who sat in with James Carter at the State Street Church, he's now a "cute" (as one enthusiastic young female audience member was heard to exclaim) young college graduate who has taken major steps toward developing a unique personal style, one that's essentially cool and thoughtful but can jump out at you when the inspiration hits.

Joining Stillman for Friday night's concert at Space, a relaxed, hospitable nonprofit arts venue on Congress Street, was Pownal's own Chris van Voorst Van Beest, an upright bass player who has also developed right before our eyes into a fine musician, now based in New York.

Rounding out the group were drummer Kendrick Scott, from Houston, and pianist Albert Sanz, from Valencia, Spain, both of whom Stillman met while attending school in Boston.

The foursome relied primarily on their own material for the two-hour show, much of it revealing a sophisticated take on the contemporary mainstream of jazz, a mainstream that incorporates musical ideas from other cultures and genres but still manages to swing in a way that ties it

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to the ever-evolving lineage of jazz.

With only a couple of brief, unintended dissonances to mar the performance, it could easily be said that the show was a substantial success.

Stillman's "Seville," inspired by his touring of Spain, was an early favorite, with its slightly exotic melody revealing a good feel for the Moorish currents within that region's cultural history. Sanz's "Tangiko" also incorporated diverse musical sources, but a solid contemporary dance beat from Scott kept this catchy tune much more closely grounded in the here and now.

The band's namesake signature tune featured the sort of rhythmic surge from Scott and van Voorst Van Beest that pushed Stillman and Sanz into some of their most spirited work.

It was a lot of fun to watch the young saxophonist physically coax a flowing solo from his horn as well as to hear the remarkably nuanced approach Sanz was able to bring to his work, particularly during a well-structured solo introduction that called to mind the classical music of Janacek.

The pianist's fascinating reharmonization of "How Deep Is the Ocean," as well as his own, as yet untitled, new samba, suggested, when coupled with Stillman's breathy contributions, the softly assertive style of Stan Getz.

*Steve Feeney is a free-lance writer who lives in Portland.*