

CD Reviews - August 2009 by [George Fendel](#), and [Kyle O'Brien](#)

(Previous CD Reviews are available at the [CD Archives page](#).)

Live at Smoke, David Berkman Quartet.

Smoke is a now famous jazz club in New York, and pianist Berkman was happy to record his live disc there. With saxophonist Jimmy Greene (a powerhouse), bassist Ed Howard and young drummer Ted Poor, Berkman creates building excitement for the house crowd. The recording quality is vibrant, letting Greene build his fine solos but also letting audience noise help with the energy. All songs are Berkman originals, save for the Benny Golson tune, "Along Came Betty." The rest mark Berkman as a definite New Yorker, pushing chords and tempos while reminding us of the great past of New York jazz with nods to swing and bop. The disc seems to have reverence for those who came before in the jazz world while remaining forward thinking and original. Berkman is an inspired soloist, playing comforting chord comps one minute and taking it outside the next, and he's helped along by a band that follows his moves. Recording live brings out the best of the group.

2009, Challenge Records, 54 minutes.