

NY CULTURE

Sparring Duets and Classic Cabaret

Denny Zeitlin, Vocalist Kendra Shank and More in This Week's Jazz Scene

By

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Kendra Shank & John Stowell

Roulette

509 Atlantic Ave., Brooklyn

(917) 267-0368

Sunday

Like Denny Zeitlin, cutting-edge vocalist Kendra Shank is equally adept at both familiar song forms and open-ended improvisations. Some of the most magical moments on her latest album, "New York Conversations," a set of ingenious duos with guitarist John Stowell, are when she combines the two. The opener, for instance, commences with a starkly original treatment of "Blue Skies" before the two fly off beyond blues skies and into outer space. Some of it is rather trippy stuff, but what makes it palatable is Ms. Shank's pristine voice and lustrous pitch—she may be heading into some unusual places, but wherever she wants to go, she gets there.

Denny Zeitlin
The Kitano
66 Park Ave.
(212) 885-7119
Friday & Saturday



Buster Williams *Getty Images*

There are two distinct sides to pianist Denny Zeitlin's music: His outstanding 2012 album, "Wherever You Are (Midnight Moods for Solo Piano)" establishes his bona fides as a masterful postmodern balladeer in the general continuum of Bill Evans and Keith Jarrett.

Simultaneously, the 2013 "Both/And" shows his experimental approach, which makes heavy use of electronics and free-form improvisation. It is tempting to describe his overall output as gloriously schizophrenic, but since he's also a full-time clinical professor of psychiatry, he'd probably have a few things to say about that.

The binary nature of Mr. Zeitlin's work will be represented this weekend at Kitano; on Friday he gives a solo recital and on Saturday he convenes a trio with bassist Buster Williams and drummer Matt Wilson.
