

# Nick Moran

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## Reviews of No Time Like Now 2012 (long)

**Boston Post Gazette-** 1/27/17 by Bob Morello

[http://www.bostonpostgazette.com/gazette\\_1-27-12.pdf](http://www.bostonpostgazette.com/gazette_1-27-12.pdf)

New York guitarist Nick Moran teams up with organ-ist Brad Whiteley and drum-mer Chris Benham to create the pleasurable “perfect 10” songs on No Time Like Now. Pick your favorites from tracks as the cover of Cream’s 1967 hit “Strange Brew,” trailer by Moran’s melodic “My Beautiful,” the seductive “Intention,” the funky gem “Slow Drive,” and the bass-driven “Wish-ful Thinking.” The mood changes continue with a tribute to one of Moran’s late friends on the title track, a second tribute to the great New York blues singer Frankie Paris is titled “Say Hi To Paris,” and the emotional funeral march “Natalya” is in honor of Chechen human rights activist Natalya Estemirova, who was assassinated in 2009. Yet another sendoff to a late friend results in the spirited “The Physicist Transformed,” and the finale is the cohesive “Renewal.” Superb!

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**Sea of Tranquility-** 2/5/12 by Peter Pardo

<http://www.seaoftranquility.org/reviews.php?op=showcontent&id=12248>

New York jazz guitarist Nick Moran has another winner here with the upcoming release No Time Like Now, featuring his trio that also includes organist Brad Whiteley and drummer Chris Benham. Paying homage to the classic organ trios of Lonnie Smith or Jimmy Smith, Moran and Co. take it one step further by incorporating a love for rock and blues into the jazz formula. All three players show that love in the opening cover of Cream's "Strange Brew", a fiery rendition with Whiteley's organ really snarling and getting gritty. Moran himself is a tasty player, and it's obvious he's studied the work of Grant Green, Wes Montgomery, and Lee Ritenour since first picking up the guitar. Check

out his silky lines on "My Beautiful", the mournful blues of "Intention", or the funky licks that lock in with Whiteley's organ on "Slow Drive". All the while, Benham is there at every corner, restrained yet keeping things in check with some solid rhythms. You have to love the smoldering tension of "Wishful Thinking", which features a more rock based solo from Moran, while the melodic title track is sweet jazz at its finest. Benham locks into a funky groove over which Whiteley can solo over on "Say Hi To Paris", and closer "Renewal" is a focused number with some very tasty guitar and organ solos.

If you have a soft spot for the 'organ trio', you can't go wrong with giving No Time Like Now a try. Featuring three outstanding musicians and some enjoyable songs, it's a CD well worth investigating, and I'll bet these guys are hot in a live setting as well.

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**All About Jazz**- 2/20/12 by Dan McClenaghan

<http://www.allaboutjazz.com/php/article.php?id=41433>

Part of the appeal of the traditional organ trio—Hammond B3 organ, guitar and drums—is the juxtaposition of the guitar's succinct phrasing slicing through the blurry winter breeze of the B3. Another part is the music's straight-up funkiness. This is music of the city, pioneered by organist Jimmy Smith and guitarists Wes Montgomery and Grant Green. The music's heyday ran from the 1950s through the '60s, thriving in urban clubs and bars, incorporating the sounds of R&B and soul music.

A new wave in the format is at hand, with boundary-pushing organists Sam Yahel and John Medeski of Medeski, Martin & Wood. Another new face pushing those boundaries, with respect for the tradition, is guitarist Nick Moran.

Moran invites the sound and soul of rock music and blues into the mix with "Strange Brew," the opening tune on seminal power trio Cream's *Disraeli Gears* (Polydor, 1967). Moran also opens *No Time Like Now* with the song, his snappy lines snaking in and out of organist Brad Whiteley's cool, sweet wind, backed by Chris Benham's crisp drum work.

A blind listen to the disc wouldn't identify the leader; the sound is that of a cohesive unit. The Moran-penned "My Beautiful" has a floating quality, with understated, spot-on musicianship, with the leader and Whiteley equitably

sharing the solo space and comping duties.

With the exception of "Strange Brew," the tunes are all Moran originals. "Intention" has a measured melancholy; "Slow Drive" is very satisfyingly funky; and "Wishful Thinking" brims with propulsive grooves and showcases Moran's intense yet subtle approach. "No Time Like Now" has a stirring majesty, while "The Physicist Transformed" opens on a slow prowl, with the organ punctuating Moran's phrases.

The organ trio field is a dynamic and crowded one, but the Nick Moran Trio rises up near the top with No Time Like Now.

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**Free Jazz-** 2/23/12 by Paul Acquaro

<http://freejazz-stef.blogspot.com/2012/02/traveling-down-familiar-paths.html>

The guitar-organ trio has a rich history in jazz. From the Blue Note soul jazz to the jazz rock of Lifetime to the current crop of modern trios (like this one), it's a rich versatile sound.

Moran opens with an ebullient rendition of Cream's Strange Brew. He works his bright clean toned guitar ably over and around the rock classic. Brad Whiteley's organ playing fits excellently and Chris Benham's drumming buoys the song along. 'My Beautiful', which follows, is indeed a beautiful bossa influenced tune that features some really nice comping work by Moran and Whiteley as they prop up each other's improvisations. Another highlight on the recording is 'Wishful Thinking.' The organ and guitar double up on a convoluted melody while the rhythm pulsates and drives the song right into a hard edged guitar solo. The momentum here is seductive.

I'm going to avoid a song by song break down and simply wrap it by saying this is a tuneful and exciting album and worth checking out. See/listen below..

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**Critical Jazz-** 2/24/12 by Brent Black

<http://www.criticaljazz.com/2012/02/nick-moran-trio-no-time-like-now-manor.html>

The more traditional organ trio consisting of a Hammond B3, guitar and drums seemed to have faded away into relative obscurity until recently. Jimmy Smith, Jimmy McGriff and Charles Earland along with John Patton and Dr. Lonnie Smith pioneered the B3 sound that transcended jazz and took its rightful place in the urban landscape by moving into the sounds of R&B and soul music. Guitarists such as Kenny Burrell, Grant Green and Wes Montgomery were adding their own unique voice until the passage of time seemed to find the organ trio hiding out in the jazz witness protection program.

Enter guitarist Nick Moran.

With plenty of chops and a keen ear for an arrangement that pops, Moran is pushing the boundaries of the traditional organ trio by carefully exploring his rock roots while avoiding the musical trip wire of the self-indulgent. A huge roll of the musical dice finds this stellar trio taking on Cream's "Strange Brew" with surprising results. Moran shows off his prodigious talent but at the same time not disrespecting the original or himself which is the sign of a true artist. "Slow Drive" is funk-alicious - everything that is right with an organ trio is on display here. Musical chemistry permeates this recording as the trio functions as one harmonious unit as they shift dynamics and occasionally meter on the fly without drawing overt attention to their efforts. "No Time Like Now" is the title track and a delightfully eclectic tune, emotionally charged yet subtle in approach. A release that has an almost flawless ebb and flow.

Nick Moran's clean single note runs have an almost zen-like quality of less is more, no notes are wasted. Brad Whiteley provides a chameleon-like soulfulness while drummer Chris Benham sits comfortably in the pocket a master of finesse and the subtle nuances necessary to add the perfect amount of texture to this release. The organ trio field has plenty of room for an ensemble this tight. An infectious groove guaranteed to make your musical back leg shake and the right amount of soul to touch the heart.

5 Stars

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**Something Else Reviews-** 3/1/2012 by S. Victor Aaron

What struck me first about the Nick Moran Trio's second album *No Time Like Now* were the instantly likable melodies and the righteous grooves. But listening to it closer reveals other reasons to like this record: the subtle tempo

shifts (“Wishful Thinking”), a soul-jazz take on the blues that retains the soul of the original (Cream’s “Strange Brew”) and picaresque balladry (“My Beautiful”). Consisting of the guitarist leader, Brad Whiteley on organ and Chris Benham on drums, each member brings distinct strengths: Moran is a soulful plectrist [inspired by George Benson](#) but often [sounding more like Kenny Burrell](#). Whiteley doesn’t go for the [obvious Jimmy Smith licks](#), often opting for an approach [akin to Melvin Rhyne’s](#). And Benham is so adaptive to the many diverse tasks given him through songs that shift in mood but retain coherency. Other standout tracks are the funk-jazz tune “Slow Drive,” which could easily be mistaken for a stray track from John Scofield’s *A Go Go* and the sizzling groove of “Say Hi To Paris” (Youtube below), where both Whiteley and Moran deliver inspiring solos.

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### **Jazz Society of Oregon-** March 2012

No Time Like Now, Nick Moran Trio. The problem with the Hammond B-3 organ is that it sounds like a Hammond B-3 organ, and nothing else, so it’s difficult to hear it played in a way that’s different from the soul jazz masters that made it cool. I’m indifferent to the organ, but I’m game to hear good musicianship, so guitarist Moran’s latest organ trio disc let me enjoy the music without being put off by the patented vibrato of Brad Whiteley’s organ. Moran is a very good player, and his hollow-body guitar sound is rich and melodic. With drummer Chris Benham, the trio is tight, and the chordal instruments know their roles, which means the organ doesn’t get in the way of the guitar, and vice versa. A cover tune opens the disc, a funky soul version of Cream’s “Strange Brew,” which doesn’t really bring anything new to the table. It’s when they dive into Moran’s original tunes that it picks up and becomes more than an organ groove recording. Moran’s tunes have a complexity that makes the organ work harder, especially with bass lines that aren’t just bluesbased, as on the ever-shifting, Latin-ish tune, “My Beautiful.” The guitar is the focal point throughout, and Moran handles a diverse group of tunes with aplomb, as on the John Scofield-esque “Wishful Thinking,” and the mellow waltz, “No Time Like Now.” Taking the organ trio out of its usual realm creates good things here.

2012, Manor Sound Records. Playing Time: 55:54.

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**Lucid Culture-** 3/5/12 by Alan Young

Nick Moran's second organ trio album, *No Time Like Now* is "not a Chicken Shack band" record, the jazz/funk guitarist asserts. It's not that he doesn't love classic B3 grooves, it's just that he wants to be freed from the constraints of that idiom, which he makes absolutely clear right from the album's opening track, a funky reinvention of Cream's *Strange Brew*. Drummer Chris Benham pushes it along with a steady, somewhat restrained pulse as organist Brad Whiteley cascades and swirls with a similar terseness before they bring it way down for a relaxed, starry halfspeed guitar interlude. Moran's bluesy bends, uncluttered, clear tone and precise staccato reach back for a Memphis soul feel as much as they do to George Benson. As the album goes on, the group expands their palette to include soul, rock and a whole lot of funk.

The rest of the compositions are Moran originals. *My Beautiful* is a carefree bossa nova ballad given extra heft by Whiteley's washes of sustain, and then an alternately smoky and spiraling solo before Moran takes an effortlessly cheery one of his own. The next cut, *Intention* is a slow, warmly catchy soul groove that wouldn't be out of place in the early Grover Washington, Jr. songbook (a good soprano saxophonist would have a field day with this melody). Then they pick up the pace with the deep-fried southern funk of *Slow Drive*, Moran channeling vintage Larry Carlton circa 1976 with his agile pull-offs and coppery vibrato, segueing into the trickily rhythmic *Wishful Thinking* with its artful dynamic contrasts, subtly plaintive, crescendoing chords and then an off-center, Walter Becker-ish guitar solo.

Not everything here is as easygoing. The title track, a casually hopeful, warmly pulsing, nostalgic ballad, underscores the irony of Moran's final conversation with a friend who died suddenly afterward. *Say Hi to Paris* is an aptly wry, funky, vintage Crusaders-style homage to the late New York blues singer and bandleader Frankie Paris, an irrepressible character who played pretty much every dive bar in Manhattan that had music 20 years ago. *The Physicist Transformed*, a biting, minor-key elegy for a friend who was a scientist by day, bluesman by night, builds from a Balkan-tinged circular riff, through suspensefully crescendoing nocturnal cinematics to a drum solo that stops just thisclose to crushing. And *Natalya*, inspired by Natalya Estemirova, the Chechen human rights activist murdered in 2009, maintains a stunned, brooding ambience, Moran stately and wistful against Whiteley's eerie, funereal chords. The album closes with an upbeat note with *Renewal*, a steady, purposeful clave tune lit up by Whiteley's insistent volleys and Moran's casually propulsive, loping single-note lines. The Nick Moran Trio plays the album release show for this one this coming Friday, March 9 with three sets

starting at 7:30 PM at the Bar Next Door.

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### **Rotcod Zzaj-** March 2010 by Dick Metcalf

Nick Moran Trio – NO TIME LIKE NOW: I've kind of "pieced" this review together, because there are limited samples available for this early review copy (the CD is scheduled to be released in March). One of the smoothest cuts on the CD is "Say Hi To Paris", but this YOUTUBE vid is just pics sliced together (I'll be looking for the promoter to feed me the links to the videos & sound samples as soon as they're up). The title track, "No Time Like Now" is listenable on Soundcloud – but it sounds WAY better on the CD, of course... any way you listen to this one, it's evident that Nick is just in love with playing, & the organ that Brad Whiteley meshes together with drummer Chris Benham makes this album one you won't forget for years to come. If it's "down & funky" you're wanting, you'll just HAVE to have "Slow Drive"... a two-chord wonder that will stick in your head (& your hipbones) for months (if not years) to come – it's my favorite track on the CD, in fact. I predict that you'll be hearing a LOT MORE from this red-hot guitar player over the next year or five.... Nick & crew get a MOST HIGHLY RECOMMENDED from my jazzified ears, with an "EQ" (energy quotient) rating of 4.97. Get more information (when it becomes available) at Nick's site.

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### **Jazz Music-** 4/3/2012

<http://www.jazmuzic.com/2012/04/nick-moran-trio-no-time-like-now.html>

Nick Moran insists that at the heart of his musical makeup, is a pronounced rock and blues tradition. He should know. However, his new release "No Time Like Now," speaks eloquently in the language of jazz/funk, and translates his composing linguistics in many colors; at times with the light hues of a sensitive soul; at times with arresting effulgence; and other times with funereal darkness. But the overall emotional character of his music reveals Moran as an artist secure in allowing the inner-self to have its voice and be recognized as his vital, indispensable life beacon, irrespective of the musical tradition from which he derives.

Moran has enlisted the prodigious talents of two very accomplished and 'interesting' players to support him on "No Time Like Now," organist Brad

Whiteley, and drummer Chris Benham. Whiteley's resume reads like a tome. It begins: "Brad Whiteley is a versatile pianist, organist, producer and pedagogue, and comfortable in a wide variety of musical settings." Benham's bio reads: "As a child, Chris Benham was obsessed with drums. As early as 4, pencils were drumsticks, and any toy that could resemble a drum could be added to a makeshift drum set. Realizing they had no other choice, his parents rented a snare drum and found him some drum lessons when he was 8." Moran has had his share of stellar moments, which add the solid weight of prescience to the CD's title: "No Time Like Now." having had the good fortune of studying with legendary bassist Ron Carter at City College of New York, being influenced by other jazz luminaries, receiving early musical inspiration from jazz organist extraordinaire, Dr. Lonnie Smith, and being thoroughly mesmerized at 15 by a performance of jazz guitarists George Benson and Phil Upchurch.

Moran wrote all the tunes (10) on the CD. His exceptional composing ability and fertile writer's imagination are reflected in a playing style that is transparent in its articulation, logical, devoid of trite cliches, and marble-smooth whether he is teasing out a melody, or improvising in jazz/funk/rock free-flow.

The trio is tight; cohesive; and hits the ground running with the Cream/Eric Clapton 1967 hit ("Strange Brew"). Brad Whiteley's organ locks on to its rock/funk radar signature with a searing solo against Chris Benham's precise cymbals, and Nick Moran's guitar out front hanging ten. ("Strange Brew") will definitely pull the dancers on to the dance floor.

The mood and tempo shift to a bolero-flavored ("My Beautiful") with Moran taking his guitar center stage and letting it make beautiful symmetrical circles like a multi-colored kite in a clear sky. Moran then embarks on three tunes ("Intention"), that acutely describes his guitar "sound," ("Slow Drive") that re-visits his strong blues/rock roots, and ("Wishful Thinking") where Moran indulges his creative composing side: "I wanted to write a tune that changes meter in mid-stream without the listener noticing. It should feel completely natural. (Nick Moran).

There is an agonizingly pensive side to Moran that he pours with affecting emotional urgency into the title track ("No Time Like Now"), but a magnificent cloak of darkness descends around his writing as he imagines ("Natalya"), Chris Benham constructs a dirge-like drum pulse, and Brad Whiteley's organ buries itself into the depths of midnight, funereal, concealed obscurity. These two selections tell a lot about the breadth, scope and emotional profundity of

Moran as a writer and imaginative interpreter of his inner reservoir of sound.

There's something very grounded about the sound-presence of an organ in a trio format. There is lots of natural space for it to fill sonically, and 'swing' unencumbered. When the organ is in the right hands under these circumstances, as is the case with the Nick Moran Trio's "No time Like Now," it can't help but be an exciting instrument to listen to, in this regard Brad Whiteley has acquitted himself with aplomb on every track; there is no hint of pedagogy in his playing personality, and on the date's final selection ("Renewal"), he breaks out of his bag with pungent swing, mixed delicately with some Monkish dissonance, and marinated with a subtle hint at a Gillespiesque "Night In Tunisia" chord selection from Moran's guitar, pulls the listener across the last rhythmic threshold, onto Moran's warm guitar fret, and out!

If you are a music lover who particularly enjoys the organ/guitar jazz/rock/funk format, then you'll hear a lot on this CD to satisfy your cravings; and 'there is no time like now' to become proactive, and really do something about it; like adding it to you music collection.