

Photo by Sonya Singh  
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# JEFF GOLDBLUM

Jeff Goldblum's debut album has made the world a better place...

Because Jeff Goldblum.

Throughout the 2000's, Jeff Goldblum (when not away filming) has been a hidden Los Angeles fixture, with his weekly jazz night at Rockwell Table and Stage. He's been playing jazz there for nearly three decades. A supperclub experience like no other.

Goldblum is our eternal flame, and we are all but moths circling the light. Hailed as "A Silver-Haired Light in a Dark World" Goldblum has been delighting audiences for more than two decades with, what can only describe as, Jeff Goldblum'isms. Female fans sometimes like to refer to him as "Zaddy" (jazz daddy), Goldblum fills a gaping void left behind by countless hollow actors that came before him. Marking the renaissance of creativity as his bargaining chip for success. Success that has, over the years, meant starring in too many blockbusters to bother listing here. His latest creative output is his debut jazz album (Decca Records) with the Mildred Snitzer Orchestra, released this November. The album quickly hit #1 on the Billboard Jazz charts and #4 on Billboard's Heatseekers chart. Goldblum is stoked.

"It's pretty exciting, isn't it?! We made something that makes people feel things they ordinarily might not," he exclaims before his recent performance at Rockwell.

The decades-long journey that led to the album all started at Rockwell Table & Stage, and I'm there to experience the legend perform in person. Goldblum has been hosting his ongoing weekly jazz night with the Mildred Snitzer Orchestra, off-and-on since 2010. The show is part ivory-tickling, part audience-flirting, and all Goldblum brilliance.

Jeff Goldblum is really good at jazz. But the actor/musician has never released his own record. Till now. The album, produced by Larry Klein [Joni Mitchell, Herbie Hancock] recreated the energy of Goldblum's Rockwell shows, at the legendary Capitol Studios. The studio was transformed into a jazz club – food and drink was served to an invited live studio audience of Rockwell regulars, friends and family – showcasing Goldblum as an accomplished jazz pianist.

Nobody works a room like Jeff Goldblum. As he warms up the intimate audience with his enjoyable eccentricity, Goldblum asks if he can read anyone's text messages dramatically on the stage, many people say yes. Which is how Goldblum turned a stranger's text conversation to her husband (about going to see Jeff Goldblum) into suspenseful, inceptive and comedic dialogue for the crowd. When Goldblum turns on the improv charm, personally engaging with patrons, mingling around tables with his mic, you see that he's the literal

embodiment of pure enjoyment of life. With his smooth cadence unlike any other, Goldblum just enjoys himself. And it's contagious.

"I conscientiously try to play piano every day, but besides that, the other part is a result, such as it is, of my improvisatory resources—such as they are," Goldblum says.

Goldblum has been playing piano since childhood, and would play various cocktail lounges in Pittsburg as a teenager. Sometime in the 1990s, and he can't recall exactly when, Goldblum got a band together through a friend-of-a-friend, John Mastro, who had local connections. Decades of playing with the Mildred Snitzer Orchestra commenced.

"We just started playing," says Mastro, who still manages the band. There was "no advertising or anything. It was just something to do." Over the years, word of mouth has equaled a sold-out room, with an audience of around 100-150, each weekly performance.

The 65-year-old actor keeps it jazzy between songs too, working the room with his swagger and his immutable speaking style—punctuated with those swinging "uh"s and "um"s. He cold reads various jokes handed to him on a piece of paper plays the Movie Game with the audience. He named a movie, we named an actor in that movie, he named another actor and another movie, and so on. It's kind of like Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon, except more open-ended. The audience participation is part of the show's charm. Goldblum interacts with everyone, taking photos, and having chats with whoever his eye lands on. He spots his agent in the audience and serves up some entertaining banter back and forth.

"I love being at Rockwell," Goldblum says, in that charmingly Goldblum way, as he wades around the sea of tables. "This is my real reason for doing this, I don't get a chance to get out of the house." He talks about how it's the only night of the week he stays out late, otherwise he's at home playing dad to his two young sons.

I also got an impromptu sit down with Goldblum's friendly long-time drummer, Kenny Elliott, during intermission, over a glass of Whiskey. We talk about the brilliance of the loose hang sesh vibe of the show and The Goldblum Factor, which compliments the jazz in a way that doesn't make it become second fiddle.

"I love improvising and that feeling of communication and interplay. It's one of the cornerstones of my acting technique. I see my music in the same way," Goldblum says.

