



Tony Koch AND THE Alt News Band

The AltNews Band brings together elements of neo bop, nu jazz, chill and Latin music with unexpected instrumental solos, richly layered synth sounds, hip rhythms and bluesy, funky guitar hooks. Started by guitarist, composer and jazz visionary Tony Koch (Kosh), the quintet is filled out by producer, engineer and bass player Miles Hill, drummer Bobby Ruggiero, saxophonist Campbell Ryga and renowned Vancouver multi-instrumentalist Miles Black. Members have established their own distinctive voices through decades of innovating, performing and recording, and because Koch carefully lays out each of his compositions with these unique players in mind, The AltNews Band achieves a compelling sweet and savory blend of their individual ideals. Songs sizzle with ultra-hip, lyrical melodies, rich harmonies and dynamic fusion grooves with undertones of funk and rock that challenge concepts of traditional jazz while still holding true to its deep, improvisational roots.

The group's second and latest album, *Funk Jazz from Planet Earth* builds on the acclaimed success of its debut recording, *Uber Chill*, which was released in October 2017. *Funk Jazz from Planet Earth* sees The AltNews Band taking a hard turn towards the exploration of retro funk/bop/fusion grooves with elements of Afro/Latin/Pop vibes thrown in for good measure. This new collection of ten originals features exciting, hip grooves which provide framing and context for complex, neo bop melodies and harmonies with ultra-hooky themes, all highlighted by soaring, passionate solos that wind their way through exciting key changes and musical motifs. *Funk Jazz from Planet Earth* once again showcases the group's sizzling chemistry as they present rich and meaningful music, telling stories about the thrill of life's mysteries.

The AltNews Band came together after Koch retired from full-time teaching and moved just up the coast from Vancouver, to Pender Harbour, where he had built a home and small custom studio that became an inspiring place to create new music. After putting together several tunes, he contacted long-time friend, producer, engineer and bass player Hill, who had partnered with him on a fusion project 25 years prior. The pair tightened up arrangements before bringing in versatile pianist Black to inject a neo bop attitude into the project. They then invited Ruggiero from Las Vegas and, after rehearsing songs for the album and tweaking arrangements, they sought a broader color palate and enlisted the amazing talents of saxophonist Campbell Ryga.

Members of the AltNews Band are all accomplished artists and creators with extraordinary backgrounds. Koch is a long-time music educator and multi-instrumentalist who has played in a wide variety of jazz groups, including the Vancouver Ensemble of Jazz Improvisation (VEJI) and has toured the Canadian jazz festival circuit, performing at the Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, Edmonton, Victoria, and Halifax Jazz Festivals, as well as many others. Along with mixing the opening and closing ceremonies of the 2010 Olympic Games, Hill has recorded and performed live with artists including Van Morrison, Michael Bublé, Colin James, Brazilian pop sensation Ivan Lins and more and has played on over 600 records ranging from jazz, funk and tango to country and rock. Black is a well-known composer, writer and performer in the Vancouver jazz scene. He is a part of multiple modern jazz groups and has worked with artists such as Mark Murphy, Slide Hampton, George Coleman, Sheila Jordan, Dee Daniels, Skywalk, Lew Tabackin, Von Freeman and numerous others. Ruggiero has over 30 years of professional touring, producing and recording experience as a drummer, vocalist and musical director with credits including Van Morrison, Sam Butera, Beau Brummels, Natalie Cole, Jimmy Smith, Roger Daltrey, Tom Jones, Paul Simon, Eric Clapton, Lee Greenwood, Al Hurt and appearances on The Tonight Show. Ryga has participated in 26 international tours and is the recipient of three Juno Awards, two Western Canadian Music awards in the jazz category, a Grammy nomination and was featured on Michael Bublé's Grammy-winning song "Crazy Love."

The AltNews Band continues to seek answers to the eternal question, "What is jazz?" through fresh music that pushes its boundaries while honoring its roots. The band [sic] will hit the studio again to record new compositions, which will comprise a third album due in Spring/Summer 2019. *Funk Jazz from Planet Earth* is out now.

