



Mel Bay  
RECORDS

## *Awakening*

## Corey Christiansen Quartet

Corey Christiansen is better known in jazz guitar circles as an author of instructional books than as a recording artist, but *Awakening* should boost his profile as a gifted, Wes Montgomery-influenced player. In addition to bringing a fresh and contemporary slant to pop standards (including a lovely, dramatically arching take on “Darn That Dream”), he contributes several original tunes that generate lots of colorful mood shifts and fluid interplay...

**Mike Joyce**

*Washington Post*

Corey Christiansen is based in St. Louis, where he is the senior music editor and guitar clinician for Mel Bay Publications. In addition, he is an excellent guitarist who has a passionate sound and plays modern straight-ahead jazz. On *Awakening*, he and his quartet with pianist Per Danielsson perform four of his originals, the obscure “Last Night in Manhattan” (which has stimulating chord changes), and four jazz standards. Among the more memorable selections are the jazz waltz “Awakening,” an up tempo “Little Hands, Big Dreams,” a relaxed rendition of Sam Rivers’ “Beatrice,” and cooking versions of “All the Things You Are,” “Darn That Dream” (which has a Latin tinge), and “A Lone Together.” Throughout, Christiansen and pianist Danielsson take consistently rewarding solos, while bassist Mark Neuenschwander and drummer Danny Gottlieb are stimulating in support. Although three of the four players (all but Gottlieb) are far from famous in the jazz world, all deserve to be better known. Collectors of bop-oriented guitar recordings will certainly enjoy *Awakening*.

**Scott Yanow**

*All Music Guide*

Swinging and lively, Corey Christiansen’s quartet offers up a program of originals and standards that are refreshingly vibrant, in a genre fraught with tepid competency. The group alternates between classic chord changes and modal explorations for a set that embraces all the best qualities of mainstream straight-ahead jazz.

**Troy Collins**

*Cadence*

His stinging, elastic solo lines are marvels of technique, precision, invention and storytelling prowess, and he writes delightful, memorable tunes. This 2004 album, *Awakening*, is undoubtedly the beginning of a long career.

**Steve Pick**

*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*



Mel Bay  
R E C O R D S

## *Awakening*

## **Corey Christiansen Quartet**

Corey Christiansen's CD *Awakening* is one of the heaviest debut offerings I've heard in a long time. He's an impressive technician, but clearly plays from the gut, measuring out equal amounts of precision and emotion. Although he shows a clear command of the mainstream jazz idiom, it is his flair for adventuresome composition (both spontaneous and written) that really marks him as a distinct voice on the guitar, and one to be watched in the future!

**Jim Fisch**

*20th Century Guitar*

"Awakening", the first track of the nine, foreshadows not so much the adventurous nature of Christiansen's playing to come, even though he makes clear that a pushing of the envelope certainly can be a component of his talent, but rather the crystalline nature of his tone, rich and glowing, and the logical development of his solos, narrative in their logic. *Awakening* awakens listeners to a superb guitarist who has developed his own approach that remains technically accomplished and inviting.

**Bill Donaldson**

*Jazz Improv Magazine*

This CD is high-energy playing from start to finish. The quartet presents a first-rate musical experience for the listener. Mel Bay Publications has worked very hard in the past several months offering solid method books and CDs for the jazz guitarist. This offering from their senior music editor and clinician confirms the success of their efforts.

**Vince Lewis**

*Just Jazz Guitar*

From the first note, Corey Christiansen lights a rhythmic fire that never flickers, punctuating chords with precision and soloing with zeal on this set of inventive originals and standards.

**David Zaworski**

One of the best jazz-guitar records I've heard in a long time. Beautiful playing, beautiful writing, beautiful sound.

**Joe Diorio**