



entrancing DAYDREAMS, keeping the momentum rolling in a big way with this delicious offering. It's a gentle collection of originals, ranging from the pensive, pretty "Forever and Always" (for his wife, Jenny) and "This, I Pray" to the exotic "Sakura" to the sparkling, mid-tempo "Dancing" and "Old School." Larry's horn work is superb and velvety smooth, and the settings he surrounds it with are rich and lyrical. When asked about his music, he said, "I try to engage the listener with strong melodies over interesting harmonies and add counter melodies to create those 'moments' in my work." After several listens, I'm happy to report a multitude of those "moments" throughout this CD. Larry Lagerberg's DAYDREAMS is a true delight! ~SCOTT O'BRIEN

AZAR LAWRENCE *Speak the Word* AzarLawrence.com



Tasty Smooth Jazz falls out of the tenor saxophone of Mr. Azar Lawrence on his sensual, new ballad "Luxury" -- One of the most romantic jazz pieces to seep into our ears and consciousness in a very long time. Romance abounds on the first radio single from SPEAK THE WORD. What this song conveys in just over 3-minutes is inspired work from the jazz legend, who has played with the greats over the years, including Miles Davis, Marvin Gaye, Frank Zappa and the McCoy Tyner Quartet. The highly evolved artist began his performance at the unbelievable age of 5, when he played violin with the USC Jr. Orchestra. At 8 he became a vocalist and at 11 an accomplished pianist. It wasn't until his journey led him to Coltrane that he desired a "mystical connection" to the saxophone. The rich and textured musical path of Azar Lawrence is truly revealing and available on-line... it's a must-read. The new album, SPEAK THE WORD is highly recommended! Start now by downloading "Luxury"! ~SANDY SHORE

MICHAEL LIPSICH & DENNY SLAWN *The Chicago Side of Me* Independent



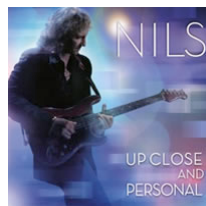
Journey with me, if you will, to a musical place where retro meets today... where a wide range of textures come together under a common theme of timeless, classic style... as timeless as penny loafers and button-down collars. You might think from this description that THE CHICAGO SIDE OF ME contains standards. You'd be partially correct. These songs all sound like evergreens, but they're all new originals from the pen of Chicago native Dr. Michael Lipsich... arranged, produced, and performed with warmth and style by keyboardist Denny Slawn. This is also a salute to Chicago's myriad musical styles that have inspired Dr. Lipsich... from romantic combo jazz to ballads reminiscent of the Big Band era to Dixieland jazz to festive Latin rhythms. The melodies are engaging, the performances outstanding, and production is World-class. THE CHICAGO SIDE OF ME from Michael Lipsich and Denny Slawn is an absolute delight. Don't miss this one and don't miss the duo's newest jazz offering, APPLE MARTINI featuring scintillating cocktail jazz. ~SCOTT O'BRIEN

TORCUATO MARIANO *So Far From Home* NuGroove Music



After spending a wonderful afternoon with Torcuato and his wife Monica in Rio De Janeiro just before Carnival this year, I was able to get a good idea of who this talented guitarist is and how his life flows in the "Marvelous City." The easy going Mariano is fun to be with and drives like Mario Andretti around Sugarloaf Mountain and Copacabana Beach... his music is no different really... relaxed and high performance. Always a radio favorite with his solo releases, he's also played and toured with Sergio Mendes, Ivan Lins, Gal Costa and many others. The brand new release is a smooth, cool soundtrack for contemporary life, glistening with rich guitar work and sublime melody... featuring world class players including Michael Lington, Marcelo Martins, Hamilton de Holanda and the rhythm section is off-the-chain solid due to the very capable hands of Vinnie Calaiuta on drums and Neil Stubenhaus on bass. Favorite tracks include the title track, as well as the suave "Back To The Road," the funky chilled "British Time" and the sensual "Midnight Words." Many thanks to Torcuato and Monica for making me feel so welcome when I was SO FAR FROM HOME! ~SANDY SHORE

NILS *Up Close and Personal* Baja/TSR Records



Guitarist Nils has launched yet another winner with his latest release, UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL. This CD features a dozen powerful tracks, one being a stunning cover of Carlos Santana's and Tom Coster's immortal "Europa." The other 11 tunes are Nils originals, imbued with his signature guitar work... crisp and edgy, but always accessible and appealing. Radio's first single is "Jazz Cruise" with Shilts guesting on tenor sax, and it's already racing rapidly up the charts. UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL, as with Nils' previous successes, has a distinctly California vibe to it, which gets my attention, and is reflected in titles like "Catalina," "East Bay," and "Winter Rain." This is top-notch stuff, just as we've come to expect from this talented artist. Expect to be hearing songs from Nils' UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL for many weeks and months to come. Yes, he's done it again... created another smash hit! ~SCOTT O'BRIEN