

'Bopitude'

Drummer Michael Benedict moves in a distinctly different world than Jacobs or Sly Fox, and his latest effort, "Bopitude," is a tribute to the hard bop music that inspired him to pick up sticks in the first place (and mallets, too, as Benedict is a fine vibraphonist).

"Bopitude" boasts an all-star line-up of Brian Patneaude (saxophone), Chris Pasin (trumpet), Mike Lawrence (bass) and Bruce Barth (piano) in addition to Benedict, who swings like he was born in 1939.

"Moanin,'" the Bobby Timmons chestnut popularized by Art Blakey & The Jazz Messengers, is one of many highlights on the album, which is available on the Catskill-based Planet Arts imprint.

So is Clifford Brown's sprightly "Joy Spring."

The latter opens with a fantastic front line riff before letting go into a classic Patneaude break, dripping in his rich, expressive tone. Pasin has a tough task, stepping into Brown's shoes, but he, too, brings the goods.

Being that Bopitude is a new band, and not just a new album, let's hope there are more records to come bearing that name.

— *Michael Eck*