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The Saxman

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While many musicians can barely handle the demands of being in one band, Wayne Sulc (aka Saxman) performs in two, both of which released albums this year.

At 18, Sulc started playing in the D.C. area in a number of R&B and Top 40 bands. It was during this time that he met keyboardist Steve Long and percussionist Tim Cutrona, paving the way for [Saxman & Friends](#).

Perhaps because of the Friends different backgrounds, the band has gone through a number of reinventions, from jazz to R&B and back to jazz. "Mine is the old way of playing in bars and clubs. [Steve] is a bit more traditionally and classically trained," says Sulc. This combination of influences gives SaxMan and Friends a traditional, yet fresh and fun sound.

Now, more than 20 years later, Sulc and company have played with such artists as Muddy Waters, Eddie Money and Hootie and the Blowfish, and have been featured on local jazz station 105.9 FM.

It was at a 105.9-sponsored show that SaxMan and Friends got in touch with Frankie Giordano, better known as Frankie G. Or rather, he got in touch with them. Frankie G. needed a band to help him perform his up-to-date arrangements of his father's works. He found what he was looking for when he saw SaxMan and Friends play at Prince George's Plaza.

Bank-rolled by Frankie G., their album, "Voodoo," is a collection of Giordano's jazz music of the 1950s, plus a few SaxMan and Friends originals. One original written by Sulc is "Lourdes From Heaven," a sweet, mid-tempo instrumental inspired by and named for his wife.

While the CD is modern Latin-infused smooth jazz, it rests on the tenets of an older jazz style. Keeping with the tradition of that old-time jazz sound, Frankie G's vocals have a romantic, nostalgic quality reminiscent of decades long ago.

On another note (and band), Sulc's love for salsa music goes back to his childhood in South and Central America, when he would sit outside the fences of bars and listen to the music coming from inside. But it was two years ago, when Sulc met Pepe Rojas, that this salsa flame was rekindled and the two formed Esencia Tropical ("tropical essence").

Esencia Tropical spent every Thursday for a year at the South Beach Café in Bethesda, playing in front of salsa dance classes. The band released its first album, "Live at South Beach Cafe," this past June. The album captures the energy of live salsa with 14 cover songs, but Sulc hopes to release an all-original salsa album in the future.

Songs by SaxMan and Friends are available on the group's MP3 band page.

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