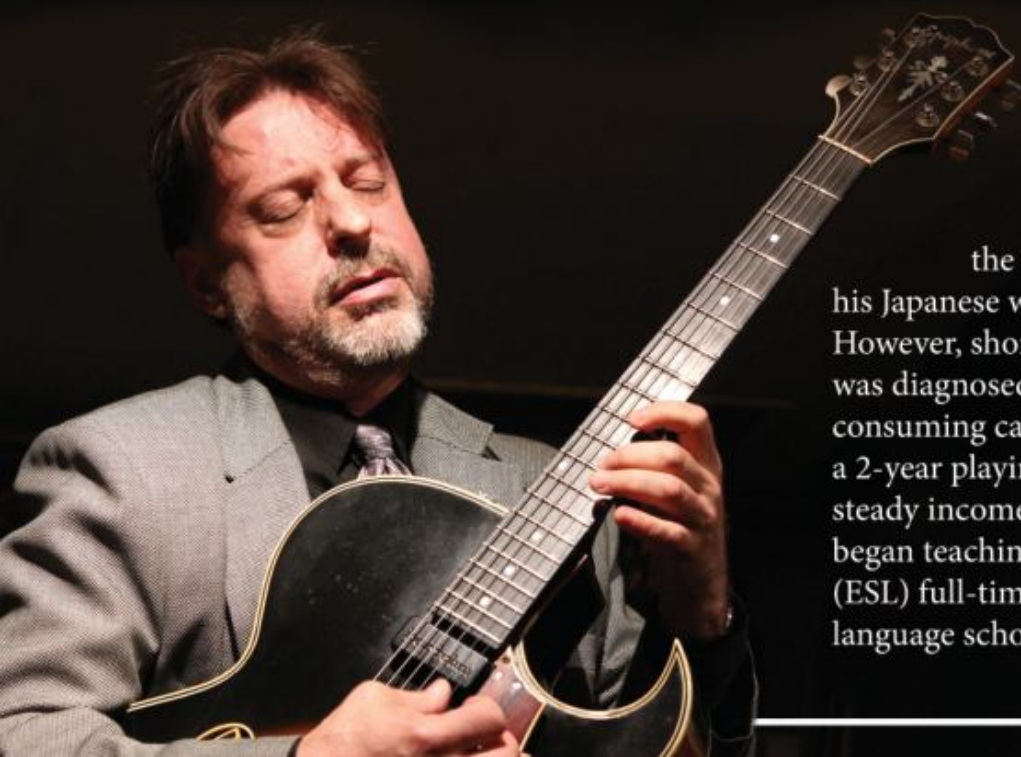


GREG CHAKO

Cincinnati-born jazz guitarist Greg Chako took his first music lessons at the age of 9, and since then has reached many heights in a professional music career that has spanned more than three decades, five countries, and numerous cultural Diasporas. At the outset of his musical life, he played with top artists like Junior Cook, Bill Hardman, Othello Molineaux, Bobby Watson, Herb Ellis, Jimmy Raney, and many others. He gained “hands-on” experience as a jazz promoter and organizer by founding a non-profit Jazz Society and running jazz concert series in Cincinnati and Amherst, MA, one of which won him a grant from the Massachusetts State Council of the Arts. He formalized those activities under the name Chako Productions, thereby starting a music business career that coincided alongside his personal performances.

Chako's most prolific period occurred after a move to the Far East in 1992, starting in Hong Kong where he played in Broadway musicals including *West Side Story*; concerts with the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra; in jazz clubs with the likes of Curtis Fuller and Richie Cole; and booked ongoing concert series for top-tier clients including The Oriental, Hong Kong, where in 1994, he recorded his first CD, *Everything I Love, The Greg Chako Trio Live at the Captain's Bar*.

Moving to Singapore in 1994, he incorporated his entertainment business, Chako Productions Pte. Ltd., which quickly became one of the regional “players” of the entertainment industry. He established himself as a first-rate soloist, bandleader, composer, and recording artist by regularly leading 12 jobs a week; making multiple videos, including a full-length documentary movie called, *An American Cat in the Lion City*; appearing on TV and in other media forums; playing jazz festivals; and producing 4 CDs: *Live at Raffles*; *Sudden Impact*; *Integration*; and *Integration II*.



Greg's upward trend in Singapore was about to suffer a downturn due to life's tragic events. In 2003, after leading a steady jazz gig in China with a band which the local Shanghai media called, “The finest jazz act to ever play in the PRC,” Greg moved to Japan with his Japanese wife (of 2 years) to start a new life. However, shortly after arriving in Japan, his wife was diagnosed with terminal cancer. The all-consuming cancer-fight that followed resulted in a 2-year playing and recording hiatus. To make a steady income during those difficult times, Greg began teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) full-time for Berlitz, Japan, a 100 year-old language school.

After his late-wife's death, Greg began to work regularly again as a guitarist in Japan, playing clubs with his own group and as a sideman. He began recording again with a new passion in 2005, starting with a double CD called *Where We Find Ourselves*, featuring all-original compositions, and followed by *Two's Company*, *Three's a Crowd*; *Paint a Picture, Tell a Story*; and *Everybody's Got a Name*, on which Greg returned mostly to his trio roots. Backed by his regularly working band mates on these releases, reviewers were impressed by their good chemistry and tight, flawless backing, one commenting: "It's a muscular sound wrapped in gloves of velvet . . . superb, exquisite, delicious!" placing Greg, in the minds of his reviewers at least, among the most elite jazz guitarists. Greg's CDs spent time on the Jazzweek, CMJ and RMR Jazz Charts, included multiple Top Ten spots, and continue to enjoy consistent critical acclaim from the Jazz community.

Growing weary of being a foreigner after living for over 16 years in the Far East, and desiring to attain a college teaching position to "give back" in selfless service, Greg wanted to return to the USA and reduce (be more selective of) his performances. At age 50 he went back to college. He completed a Bachelors of Arts degree with multi-disciplinary focus in music and business; then a Masters of Music degree (MM) at William Paterson University in New Jersey, where he met and studied under: Mulgrew Miller, Harold Mabern, and Cecil Bridgewater, among others. After earning the MM in 2011 (with a 3.9 GPA), he was admitted to a Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA) program at The Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY, where he still resides. Greg's graduate studies focused on big band arranging, Ethnomusicology, and an independent study with Harold Danko in which Greg began to develop a pedagogy for guitarists and arrangers using his innovative solo-guitar arrangements that merged jazz and classical techniques. This resulted in the release of his 10th (and first solo guitar) CD, called *My World on Six Strings*, of which Gene Bertoncini said, "A total orchestra, the complete package . . . I love his arrangements!"

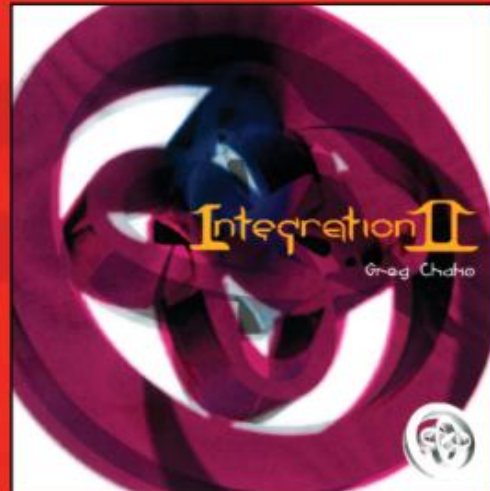
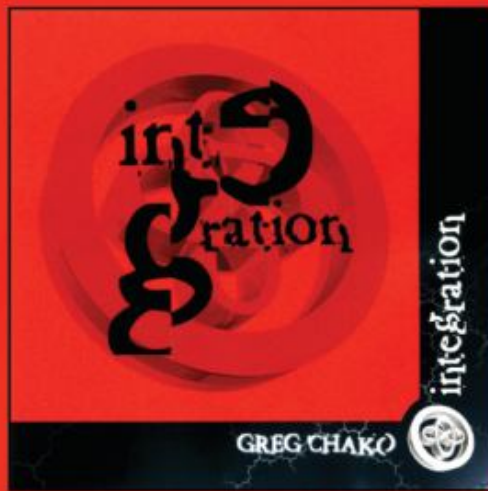
Greg's life journey has been at once triumphant and tragic. His personal and professional experiences have unquestionably combined to enhance and mature his music, and his world-view of unity and openness is also manifested in his creative efforts. Greg says that more than anything, he hopes to "move people," and anyone who takes the time to listen cannot help but feel the powerful and honest emotions clearly expressed through his music. After pausing his life's travels, taking a break from playing every single gig that came along, and completing 6 years of higher education, Greg is now poised to return to the music he loves and re-introduce himself to audiences that may not yet have had the benefit of enjoying his superb skills and swinging jazz.

Greg Chako creates a new style, breathing exotic jazz-ethno music full of spirit and solid musical foundation

- **Jazz Dimensions of Germany**

A jazz mosaic painted with the very best of cultural, ethnic, and musical sensibilities. That striking combination provides a sumptuousness and extensiveness in the music that is rarely found in any genre. I think it's safe to say that Greg Chako and his magnificent band are one of the world's best-kept secrets. The word is now out; don't hesitate in seeking out this essential jazz experience!

- **Keith 'MuzikMan' Hannaleck, Jazz Reviews**



Integration and *Integration II* features forward-thinking music which All About Jazz.com said, “looks the future in the eye.” It was created during one of the happiest and most artistically fulfilling periods of Greg Chako’s life, while he was based in Singapore; and in fact, Chako drew much of his compositional inspiration from a variety of tropical locations, mimicking the rich sounds of Mother Nature and different island cultures. The titles refer both to the composer’s idea of integrating the various aspects of the individual self, as well as a cohesive musical sound from a band that was so ethnically diverse, comprised of African-American, Hokkien Chinese, Euro-Asian, Indian, Malay, Filipino, and British band members. Though originally recorded in 2000, in what was essentially a limited Singapore release, this music is now being re-issued as a two-CD set (as originally intended) and made available to the general public and specifically, to audiences in the USA for the very first time. Presenting 17 original Chako compositions and 1 creatively re-imagined treatment of the old standard, “Poinciana,” it contains over 130 minutes of music, a veritable trip around the jazz galaxy!

Integration, the first of the two-CD set, utilizes a primary “front-line” of guitar, tenor sax, and trombone, and includes creative use of the Australian didgeridoo, plus Latin percussion jams led by former Miles Davis percussionist, Steve Thornton.

Integration II embraces a more fusion feel, with the selected use of electric piano, Tabla, and the Brazilian Surdo drum. Chako’s mainstay of swinging hard-bop is still there, but the way he blends the American drum, or “trap” set, with Afro-Latin percussion, Indian Tabla, and the Australian didgeridoo, is quite unique and refreshing. When was the last time you heard, if ever, the didgeridoo used in a contemporary jazz setting? Its use is most effective in Chako’s arrangements, enhancing the essential mainstream core of his compositions with an appealing “world” feel.

The orchestration (instrumental format) on both CDs is cleverly planned for maximum emotive effect: with a full 4-horn sax section; a guitar trio; percussion jams; smooth swing with big band-like horn hits; tender ballads with no drums; funky “Texas tenor;” and even some free improvisation.



The music transcends geographic boundaries and cultures and communicates the happiness and friendship that all music should provide

- **Vince Lewis, Just Jazz Guitar**

Recalls those exciting hard blowing sessions of the 1960's which featured Hank Mobley, Donald Byrd, and Jackie McLean . . . with an effective mix of hard bop and Latin rhythms guaranteed to keep listener attention

- **David Nathan, All Music Guide**

Chako, the composer, takes his inspiration from the rich Blue Note lode, with echoes of Shorter, Hancock, and Dorham reverberating through his uniformly heartfelt performances, all of which sound like they could have found a home in the Jazz Messengers' book

- **Cadence Magazine**



Integration I:

1. Coming Home 8:08 by Greg Chako
2. Saito's Serenade 8:04 by Greg Chako
3. Sulawesi Sky 7:09 by Greg Chako
4. Inspiration Blues 5:07 by Greg Chako
5. From the Heart 7:26 by Greg Chako
6. Integration 7:13 by Greg Chako
7. Poinciana 8:34 by Nat Simon/Buddy Bernier
8. What Happened 5:24 by Greg Chako
9. Funky Monkey 7:05 by Greg Chako

Players:

Edmond Branson, drums
Christy Smith, bass
Otrie Barrett, saxophone and flute
Reggie Perera, didjeridu
Steve Thornton, percussion
Mei Sheum & Joshua Wan, piano
Don Gomes, vocals and piano
Brian Hill, trombone



Integration II:

1. Tokong Burung-Nazri's Place 7:12 by Greg Chako
2. The Sweet One 5:24 by Greg Chako
3. Smooth Ride 7:45 by Greg Chako
4. French Island Fantasy 8:18 by Greg Chako
5. Afro-Asian Chant 7:18 by Greg Chako
6. Ipoh Girl 1:03 by Greg Chako
7. Fine Aussie Weathered 6:25 by Greg Chako
8. Ocean Blues 6:06 by Greg Chako
9. Tokong Burung-Nazri's Place (alt) 7:06 by Greg Chako
10. The Hunny Lady 8:27 by Michael Stanton

Players:

Edmond Branson, drums
Christy Smith, bass
Greg Lyons, saxophones
David Humphries, alto saxophone
Reggie Perera, didjeridu
Steve Thornton & Mohamed Noor &
Joe Jayaveeran, percussion
Mei Sheum & Michael Stanton, piano
Leo Jeoh, trombone

Artist: Greg Chako

CD Title: Integration I & II

Add Date: January 18, 2016

Street Date: January 22, 2016

Label: Chako Productions

Website: www.gregchako.com

Available at all fine retailers



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