

Published February 8th, 2017

## Moraga man is Grammy nominee once again

By Cathy Dausman



Alan Ferber Photo Christopher Drukker

Musical lightning strikes twice, as Moraga native Alan Ferber earned his second Grammy nomination, this time for Best Instrumental Composition for "Flow."

To say Ferber plays saxophone is a bit like saying Duke Ellington or Louis Armstrong were musically inclined. Lamorinda Weekly caught up with Ferber via email while he was on the road with saxophonist John Ellis appearing at the St Barts Music Festival. Between performances he enjoyed "some much needed time to rest and recover from a busy year."

Ferber is on the faculty at NYU's jazz studies program, teaches privately and runs two ensembles, and has also been a steady presence at the Lafayette Summer Music Jazz Workshop. He admits having "unfortunately" given up playing in live Broadway orchestras: "Between my teaching, composing, gig schedule, and family commitments, my plate is too full," he says.

Family may have been the reason "Flow" came about. Ferber used a Chamber Music America grant for new jazz works to compose an hour-long piece called "Roots & Transitions" (Sunnyside Records) during the first year of his young son's life.

"My experience as a new father informed the shape of this piece," he says. The work features solos by Ferber on trombone and solo trading between Scott Wendholt on trumpet and Nate Radley on guitar. There's still more family involved as well - Ferber's brother Mark plays

drums, as he did on Ferber's 2014 Grammy-nominated album "March Sublime" (also Sunnyside Records). "A lot of my music is written with Mark in mind so I see him as somewhat of a producer as well, even though he may not know that," Ferber said. While Ferber's earlier Grammy nomination ([www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue0723/pdf/All-Thats-Jazz-Moraga-man-earns-a-Grammy-nomination.pdf](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue0723/pdf/All-Thats-Jazz-Moraga-man-earns-a-Grammy-nomination.pdf)) made use of a 17-piece big band, "Roots & Transitions" features his nine-piece Alan Ferber Nonet. It is the group's fourth album since their formation in 2004.

Ferber says he has become more involved with the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences since he was first nominated. "The Grammys have been beneficial to me," he said, "and I would really like to see other emerging artists benefit as well."

The 2017 Grammy awards program airs at 8 p.m. Feb. 12 on the CBS network. Ferber's family will accompany him, dressed to the nines, or as Ferber might say, to the Nonet. "My wife Jody and I are even in process of shopping for a tux for our 3-year-old," he says.

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