

## Fred Hersch

*Fall 2011 Update*

2011 is turning out to be a banner year for pianist/composer Fred Hersch. He has been called "A master who plays it his way." by *The New York Times*, "...the most arrestingly innovative pianist in jazz over the last decade or so." by *Vanity Fair* and "...a pianist, composer and conceptualist of rare imaginative power." by Nate Chinen of *The New York Times*. He won the 2011 Best Pianist of the Year Award from the Jazz Journalists Association, Time Out NY listed him as one of New York's Jazz Icons and he placed 4th in the 29th Annual Downbeat Critic's Poll.



In March, Palmetto released "Alone at the Vanguard" to rapturous critical acclaim. Hersch was the first pianist in the 76-year history of the Village Vanguard to play a solo piano week, and this disc captures the final set of his second week-long engagement there. NPR listed it as one of the Best Jazz CDs of the Year So Far, the *New York Jazz Record* called him "one of the great masters of jazz piano", *All About Jazz* proclaimed that "This performance is a clear-as-day claim-staking by an artist at the height of his powers", *Downbeat* refers to his "formidable technique and moving compositions". *Jazziz* said "this is music that never threatens to fade into the background. If anything, Hersch draws you in to listen more closely each time." *Jazz Times* calls it "a stunning achievement" and *The New York Times* said "it puts you in the club on a marvelous night, when his melodic ideas appear one after the other with hardly a faltering move".

May saw the world premiere of "My Coma Dreams" at the Kasser Theater at Montclair State (NJ) University. A 90-minute jazz theater multi-media work scored for 11 instruments, actor/singer and animation/computer-generated imagery, it is based on a series of dreams that Hersch remembered after he awoke from a two-month coma in the summer of 2008. *The New York Times* referenced "...stretches of susurrating minimalism; collective free improvisation delivered at microscopic volume; sophisticated musical-theater songs; staccato polytonality; and swinging, Thelonious Monk-inspired jazz." *All About Jazz* cited it as "Stunning... Storytelling doesn't get more effective and authentic than this." And *The New Republic* called it "Serious, profoundly moving and sometimes disturbing, a work of dream art as elegant as Stravinsky's "Petit Concert" and as memorable as "Yesterday." The work will be performed in the fall of 2011 in Berlin and in San Francisco. For more on My Coma Dreams, please visit [www.mycomadreams.com](http://www.mycomadreams.com)

He recently performed a weeklong engagement at The Village Vanguard with his current trio (John Hébert, bass; and Eric McPherson, drums), his working trio with whom he recorded "Whirl" for Palmetto in 2010. Of this disc, *The Ottawa Citizen* says "... jazz does not get any better and *Jazziz* commented that "Whirl" feels like genuine jazz art, decidedly fresh while still reflecting the genre's history". The trio will be touring Western Europe for the entire month of November and has dates in the US into early 2012. His duo partnership with Italian clarinet virtuoso Nico Gori continued in 2011 with performances at The Kitano in New York City and The Caramoor Jazz Festival in Katonah, NY. A new duo CD is in the works.