

# kassaba

## Concert Review

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“Kassaba at the Beachland Ballroom 3/13/04”

By TL Champion, CoolCleveland contributor

I recently witnessed a great new sound to hit the streets of Cleveland. Their name? Kassaba. Their genre? Progressive jazz. The result? A unique fusion of primitive sounding drums, with an eclectic mix of bass, sax and percussion that produces a newly provocative flavor. The group's unparalleled sound originates from a man inspired by moments in everyday life. And he names his works after those moments, which explains some of the titles that include *Should I use My Shirt?* *A Risky Operation*, and my favorite, *The Zones of Mystery*.

Greg Slawson, the group's artistic director and composer, works the piano and several of the unique percussion instruments that all members share. And because they share, a great deal of the entertainment in experiencing Kassaba is watching the delicate choreography necessary to get to different instruments on stage without missing a beat. Literally.

Slawson often acquires unique percussion instruments - that later define his work - on a lark. They are rare finds that become rare treasures as their collection of unique percussion instruments continues to grow. But the real treasure is how Kassaba pulls it all together: Progressive jazz that boasts both a classical and occasional hip-hop edge.

Classically trained from the Cleveland Institute of Music, Slawson, along with fellow group members Candice Lee (piano) and Eric Hosemann (bassist), joins arms with Mark Boich (saxophonist), from the Berklee College of Music in Boston. This foursome uses the bongos, bass, saxophone and piano with a unique line up of instruments that includes the udu, talking drum, ocean drum (which sounds like the ocean), djembe, claves, tabla, vibratone, frame drum, agogo and much more. Take a break from the ordinary and experience their unique brand of jazz.