**ILYA SEROV – BIOGRAPHY**

*“Ilya really is a talented trumpeter and a great singer.  This guy has got the goods.*

*Ilya Serov - remember that name.”   — Dave Koz*

Award-winning trumpeter /singer /guitarist /band leader Ilya Serov has a passion for jazz that knows no bounds. A talented young musician with an old soul, Ilya brings an infusion of imagination, vision and energy to the many shades of America’s original musical art form. Possessing both chops and charisma, his live performances and recordings have attracted a solid following among jazz fans and seasoned musicians alike.

Ilya’s experiences on the jazz scene have recently led him to expand his creative interests in a significant new direction that blends smooth jazz with elements of soul and R&B. In November 2021 he released his third studio album, *Just Friends,* which features platinum-selling saxophonist Dave Koz and other award-winning artists: keyboardist Greg Manning, saxophonist Alex Hahn, vocalist Matt Cusson and guitarist Kay-Ta Matsuno. The album is dedicated to one of America’s most iconic jazz trumpet players and singers, Chet Baker, and is titled after Baker’s classic jazz standard of the same name. Baker was the inspiration that pushed Ilya to begin finding his own voice in the jazz world. As his own style matured, Ilya wondered what Baker, with his musical genius, would sound like as a contemporary jazz artist today. With *Just Friends*, Ilya strives to show the connection between several generations of jazz.

Along with his renditions of Chet Baker’s most recognizable tunes from the Great American Songbook, Ilya’s considerable composition skills are displayed in several original contemporary tunes inspired by those standards. *Just Friends* features 11 songs, and the first three singles on the album are Serov’s original compositions. “Chillin’,” his first original single, was composed and released in 2020 during the isolation and introspection brought on by the global pandemic. “Heat” (featuring Dave Koz) and “Ironic” were both released in 2021. Both tracks received considerable international airplay, and “Heat” made it on the Billboard Top 30 Smooth Jazz Chart. In November 2021, Ilya was nominated as Breakout Artist of the Year by Smooth Jazz Network.

*Just Friends* also features Serov performing on a new instrument he created in collaboration with the UK’s Andy Taylor, a trumpet maker who specializes in building unique quality instruments. The instrument, which he dubbed the “Jazzohorn,” has a flugelhorn base and the shape of a saxophone, with its own unique sound and nuanced palette.

Ilya has the creds to back up his competence. Russian born and classically trained, he was

first introduced to the trumpet at the age of seven, and studied in an intense, five-year program at a demanding music academy. He won a rare and coveted scholarship to attend the prestigious St. Petersburg Conservatory of Music, and his talent as a classical trumpet player led to performances with the St. Petersburg Philharmonic, the St. Petersburg State Symphony, and St. Petersburg State Opera Theatre.

Ilya first encountered jazz as a teen, exchanging tapes and records with fellow musicians and exploring the local St. Petersburg club scene. His earliest jazz influences were Arturo Sandoval, Chet Baker, Miles Davis, Frank Sinatra and Nat “King” Cole, and he eventually incorporated their sounds and vocal stylings into his own music.

Following his passion, Ilya relocated to the United States in 2008 at the age of 21. Settling in Los Angeles, he soon established a name for himself, both as a solo artist and with his band. He regularly performs throughout the greater Los Angeles area at well-known venues such as Herb Alpert’s Vibrato, Spaghettini Jazz Club and Catalina Jazz Club. In 2014 he was awarded Best New Artist at the Hollywood International Music Awards.

Over the last few years Ilya has performed at a number of notable festivals and concert series, including the Newport Beach Jazz Festival, Catalina JazzTrax Festival, Laguna Beach Festival of Arts, TOARTS Concert Series, Big Bear Jazz Festival, and the Daytona Jazz Weekend, among others.

Serov has even dipped his toes into the Hollywood film scene, co-writing with composer Ludwig Göransson one of the main themes (Drago’s Walk Out) for the 2018 cinema sensation, Creed II. The film was directed by Steven Caple Jr. and starred Michael B. Jordan, Sylvester Stallone, and Tessa Thompson. His recording credits in the film industry include Dead Pool 2 and Addams Family 2, among others.

When not on stage, Ilya spends his time in the recording studio. His debut album, *September in the Rain* (2013), was a Big Band outing of classic jazz standards that highlighted both his horn and vocal skills. That album was followed by the release of *Back in Time* (2018), featuring classic tunes and instrumental collaborations with legendary pianist Roger Kellaway, and acclaimed saxophonist Eric Marienthal, and GRAMMY®-winning percussionist Poncho Sanchez.

“Ilya is a great, great trumpet player and I love his voice,” said Sanchez. “He has a great thing here because it’s commercial enough for the mainstream to enjoy, but hip enough for the jazz folks to like. He can sing the tunes and play them; that’s the edge he’s got.”

After hearing Serov perform, Dave Koz invited him to be a guest artist on his popular *Dave Koz and Friends at Sea Jazz Cruise*. From 2017 – 2019 he played on cruises throughout Europe and Australia with Koz and other Smooth Jazz greats, sharing the stage with the likes of Jonathan Butler, David Benoit, Larry Graham, Peter White and BeBe Winans. Ilya will again be a featured guest artist on *Dave Koz & Friends* in Amsterdam and the British Isles in May 2022.

In early March 2020, Ilya’s jazz acumen was introduced into the symphonic spectrum when his four-piece band performed with the Riverside (CA) Philharmonic as featured guest artists. Several of Ilya’s arrangements of iconic standards from the Great American Songbook were adapted for orchestra and presented as part of the Philharmonic’s Celebrating America season.

Serov’s original music has been featured on radio stations across the globe, including on SiriusXM Radio, expanding his fan base to include smooth jazz aficionados worldwide.

Ilya Serov is driven today not only by his desire to preserve jazz as an American treasure, but by his mission to engage and educate new generations of listeners. He continues to focus exclusively on contributing his time and talent to the world of jazz - its past, present and future.

For the latest information on upcoming recordings and performances, visit [www.ilyaserov.com](http://www.ilyaserov.com/)