

## **The Metro Pulse**

by Jonathan B. Frey

*A year in the life* is the CD we've been waiting for from the KJO. Last year's *One for the Team!* may've been sorta fun, what with its sporty themes, but it can't hold a candle to the performances here.

Culled from a 2001 European tour and local recording dates, the tunes herein are full of diversity and verve, from the contemporary opening cut, "Angst," through to the Dixieland-like last, "Life is Just a Bowl of Cherries."

On KJO Director **Vance Thompson's** original "Angst," the band flies dangerously low, driving the tune's insistent yet shifty arc. In addition to **Jimmy Mann's** fine solo on tenor, check out **Bill Swann** (piano) and **Keith Brown** (drums) tangling, giving no quarter. "Man, What a Beautiful Day," an infectious Thompson melody, follows as a welcome contrast, granting manageable pace and introspective solos from **Mark Tucker** on soprano sax and **Thompson** on flugelhorn.

Added to the Euro tour tunes are some wonderful locally recorded cuts, including **Donald Brown** on his original "Scenes from Knoxville" and irrepressible **Dan Trudell** (Hammond B-3 organ) on "Dig Uncle Will," where the mutual affinity of the band for the Hammond and vice versa is palpable.

Not content, the CD closes with the uncontainably swinging "Life is Just a Bowl of Cherries," with **Larry Vincent** doing his Johnny St. Cyr best on banjo and **Eric Seay** on tuba. From the driving crescendo that opens this CD to the last banjo chord on the final cut, this one's all gristle.