

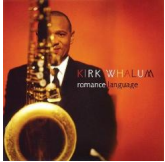
## Kirk Whalum - Romance Language (2012)

Written by bluesever

Sunday, 04 March 2012 12:04 - Last Updated Sunday, 04 January 2015 15:21

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## Kirk Whalum - Romance Language (2012)



01 – *They Say It's Wonderful* 02 – *Dedicated To You* 03 – *My One And Only Love* 04 – *Lush Life* 05 – *You Are Too Beautiful* 06 – *Autumn Serenade* 07 – *Almost Doesn't Count* [play](#)

08 – *I Wish I Wasn't*

[play](#)

09 – *I Wanna Know* 10 – *Spend My Life With You*

Personnel: Kirk Whalum (flute, soprano saxophone, tenor saxophone); Michael Ripoll (acoustic guitar); Kevin Turner (electric guitar); George Tidwell (trumpet, flugelhorn); Ralph Lofton (organ); Marcus Finnie (drums).

The 1963 Impulse! Records LP John Coltrane & Johnny Hartman helped to redefine the renowned jazz saxophonist by pairing him with a singer on a collection of standards, showing that Coltrane wasn't (or wasn't only) an avant-gardist bent on playing free jazz. Nearly 50 years later, Kirk Whalum's *Romance Language* isn't going to have the same impact on his career, even though he has recorded the same half-dozen tunes with his brother Kevin Whalum taking the vocals. Kirk doesn't have Coltrane's reputation for one thing, and for another, he and Kevin are not trying to re-create the Coltrane/Hartman sound on *Romance Language*; they just happen to be performing the same songs. In their readings, evergreens like Irving Berlin's "They Say It's Wonderful," Billy Strayhorn's "Lush Life," and Rodgers & Hart's "You Are Too Beautiful" are given smooth jazz arrangements typical of Kirk's other albums. Fellow musicians such as John Stoddart (prominently featured on electric piano on "Lush Life"), Kevin Turner (who solos on electric guitar on the long coda to "You Are Too Beautiful"), and Michael "Nomad" Ripoll (who launches "Autumn Serenade" with some flamenco-style acoustic guitar) join in to produce instrumental beds for Kirk to solo over in a warm, unhurried manner. And Kevin has a burnished croon more reminiscent of Nat King Cole than Hartman (who was in the Billy Eckstine school of singers). To fill out the disc to CD-worthy length, Kirk performs instrumentals of more contemporary material by the likes of Eric Benet and Terry Lewis & Jimmy Jam Harris. And the brothers' 83-year-old uncle, Hugh "Peanuts" Whalum, comes on to sing "Almost Doesn't Count" and shows them how it should be done. He is closer in sound and spirit to the album being paid tribute here, and his sole contribution whets the appetite for more. ---William Ruhlmann

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