

Fish Love That, at Galapagos, February 19.

Wit, fun, and the most delightful virtuosity. Start with the name of the band. [Todd Reynolds](#), the violinist (also first violin with [Ethel](#), an indispensable string quartet), served more or less as the group's spokesman. If you have fish, he explained, you can reach into your fish tank, and cup a fish in your hand. Then you can stroke its belly: "Fish love that!"

This is an improvising band, though there's composition involved, too. I'm not going to sort out where composition ends with them and improvising begins. The sound can be jazz or new music (which in itself has so wide a reach that it could just as well include a lot of jazz). Certainly with sax from [Andrew Sterman](#), who also plays other winds in the group, and trumpet from [Ron Horton](#), there can be a strong jazz feel, which [Steve Rust](#), on bass, and [Dean Sharp](#), on percussion, can underscore.

But this is really [Neil Rolnick's](#) group, and Neil, smiling behind the others on keyboards, which trigger a synthesizer and sampler, slips in the chatter of speaking voices, and other amusements. He's a wonderfully sly musician, laid back, easy, but sharply rhythmic, with an ear for just the right sound at just the right time. But then everyone in Fish Love That is sharply rhythmic, Reynolds maybe most of all... On this occasion, I liked Reynolds and Rolnick the best, though on the group's new CD, everybody is just stunning, in the most relaxed and amiable way. They're giving the world fine musical entertainment.

That might sound like faint praise – how about their musical structures? Their response to each other? Their choice of sounds? The subtleties in everything they play? – but I think we devalue entertainment. Really enriching entertainment is rare. Musical niceties, which critics talk about all the time, are much easier to find. I'm happy to be entertained, in a way that keeps all my musical senses alert. I happily recommend this CD – **Neil B. Rolnick's Fish Love That** – on Pauline Oliveros's [Deep Listening](#) label.