



Bons Amigos
Claudio Roditi (Resonance)
 by Marcia Hillman

Rio-born trumpeter Claudio Roditi has many good friends. Among them are his fellow musicians on this new CD - Romero Lubambo (acoustic and electric guitar), Donald Vega (piano), Marco Panascia (bass) and Mauricio Zottarelli (drums) - along with Tamir Hendelman, who arranged some of the selections and chose the writers of the songs that were included: Antonio Carlos Jobim, Egberto Gismonti, Eliane Elias, Toninho Horta and Johnny Alf. (There are also three original compositions by Roditi.)

Roditi is known for the beautifully warm sound of his horn playing. He attributes this to his trumpet and flugelhorn having a larger bell and rotary valves (a mechanism usually found on horns used for playing classical music). Whether Roditi is playing something slow (Elias' "Para Nada") or exploding with trumpet runs on "Bossa de Mank", he displays perfect taste and unerring technique.

As a composer, Roditi shows that he can write well in the Brazilian mode ("Piccolo Samba") as well as straightahead jazz ("Levitation"). The former shows off his piccolo trumpet (with piston valves) overdubbed five times to create a high-toned horn chorale while the latter finds him recalling his bebop exposure at age 12. The surprise on this album is Jobim's "Ligia", which Roditi not only plays, but sings in his native Portuguese. His soft voice lends itself perfectly to this lovely bossa nova.

Highlights are Lubambo's contributions, particularly on "O Sonho", "Fantasia" and "Amandamada". Vega's piano improvisations and flying fingers on runs are impressive as well on "Ligia" and "Ceus e Mar". Not to be overlooked is Panascia's solid basswork throughout and his lyrical solos on "Piccolo Samba" and "Ligia". Zottarelli is notable as the engine that drives this group and Hendelman's arrangements are a wonderful asset, especially the tandem lines he wrote for horn and guitar on several tracks. Enjoy this one. *Bons Amigos* is full of the joy ever present in Brazilian music.

For more information, visit resonancerecords.org. Roditi is at Dizzy's Club Dec. 13th-18th with Duduka Da Fonseca/Helio Alves Samba Jazz. See Calendar.



Moves Between Clouds (Live in Warsaw)
Undivided (Multikulti Project)
 by Ken Waxman

Sometimes there can be too much of a good thing. At least that's how it appears since American clarinetist Perry Robinson has joined the Undivided combo, adding his voice to what previously had been an indivisible whole, despite every member being from a different country.

Not that there's anything particularly grating

about the playing of the clarinetist, who has followed a singular path since the '60s. However by appending another reed sound to that of Polish bass clarinet, clarinet and tarogato player Wacław Zimpel means that tentativeness infects this CD, compared to the band's stronger debut session as a quartet, recorded five months earlier. As a matter of fact, presuming that this record of a Warsaw concert is programmed in chronological order, all five don't seem to be fully in sync until the final track, the nearly 20-minute "What A Big Quiet Noise".

Here, finally the piano voicing of long-time American expatriate Bobby Few becomes as muscular as it had previously been metronomic. Ukrainian bassist Mark Tokar, somewhat of an invisible - or inaudible - man beforehand, produces string rumbles and launches into a well-paced linear solo, encompassing downwards rubs and col legno pops. Add the focused flams and cymbal colors from German drummer Klaus Kugel and suddenly the rhythm section is boiling with barely restrained tension. As Few concentrates on tremolo patterning the reedists combine for altissimo extensions, with Robinson flutter tonguing in response to a pressurized obbligato from Zimpel. Eventually the piece climaxes with sluicing double counterpoint from both horns, complemented by strummed piano chords plus ruffs and rolls from the drummer.

Putting aside the hesitancy that results from a band slowly integrating a new member, this final track demonstrates that Undivided could soon be undivided once again. It probably is. Considering this CD is two years old, more recent documents would tell the story.

For more information, visit multikulti.com. Perry Robinson is at Clemente Soto Velez Cultural Center Dec. 12th with Rozanne Levine. See Calendar.



Out of This World
Ted Rosenthal Trio (Playscape)
 by Ken Dryden

Ted Rosenthal is a jazz veteran who gained attention as the pianist in the final edition of the Gerry Mulligan Quartet and also won first place in the Second Annual Thelonious Monk Jazz Piano Competition back in 1988. For the past several years, the pianist has flown a bit under the radar, since most of his CDs have been recorded for release in Japan or Europe. But the Manhattan School of Music faculty member does not deserve to be overlooked, as his recordings showcase his innovative arrangements of familiar pieces and often-subtle touch.

This trio session with bassist Noriko Ueda (a veteran of the Diva Big Band and related small groups) and drummer Quincy Davis (who has recorded with Tom Harrell and Bobby Watson, among others) opens with a potent workout of the title track, in which Ueda's hip counterpoint line provides a catchy backdrop for the leader's driving solo, which also features a lively trading of fours with Davis and a brief, dissonant detour into Dave Brubeck's "Blue Rondo à la Turk". The pianist explores a trio of Gershwin pieces. "Embraceable You" is one of the most frequently recorded standards, but Rosenthal keeps it fresh with an improvisation that develops gradually, opening up as it gains intensity while never losing sight of its theme. His setting of the bluesy, melancholy "Prelude No. 2" is accented by Davis' military-like

cadence while the breezy interpretation of "Have You Met Miss Jones" is a musical whirlwind focusing on Rosenthal's light touch in a driving bop setting.

The pianist is also a marvelous interpreter of ballads like Billy Strayhorn's "Lotus Blossom", playing it as a lush, lyrical waltz, accented by the sparse yet perfect accompaniment of Ueda and Davis (on brushes). Likewise, Rosenthal's whispering take of "In the Wee Small Hours of the Morning" tells its story without the need to hear its lyrics.

For more information, visit playscape-recordings.com. Rosenthal is at Smalls Dec. 6th and The Kitano Dec. 15th. See Calendar.

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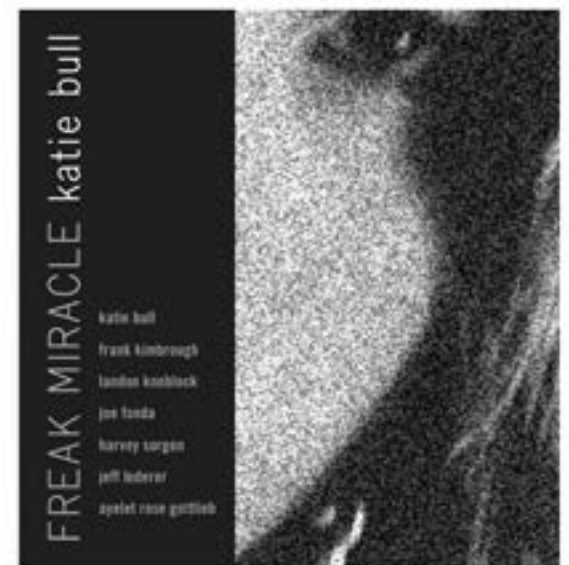
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