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




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Album of the Week: Nuevo Mundo, Gabriel Alegria

Posted: 2008-05-31

Discuss

Nuevo Mundo
Gabriel Alegria
Saponegro Records



Emerging trends in Latin Jazz rarely appear out of thin air, they simply spend years existing outside of mainstream awareness. These trends generally start as an idea among a group of musicians, and they pursue it diligently. Early experimentations might include rough edges, but a powerful concept always spreads. Listeners become interested, and other artists integrate the same ideas. As the trend gains momentum among its small group of followers, the rest of the world remains happily unaware. The trend needs an individual with a strong musical voice and a clearly defined vision to push it into the general public's consciousness. This person's vision generally carries such strength that the greater music world can't help but be effected by it. Trumpeter Gabriel Alegria stands poised to introduce Afro-Peruvian Jazz to the world with a collection of strong performances on *Nuevo Mundo* that demonstrate the natural connection between jazz and Peruvian music.

Incorporating Swing and Afro-Peruvian Rhythms

Some songs find a tangible connection between jazz and Peruvian styles by integrating various rhythmic feels and standard repertoire. Alegria, trumpeter Bobby Shew, and trombonist Bill Watrous assertively play a rhythmic melody over drummer Hugo Alcazars swing feel on *Buscando A Huevito* until percussionist Freddy Lobatns cajon implies a Festejo rhythm. Watrous tears through a series of quick bebop lines over the swing feel until the band transitions into a much thinner texture with a Lando rhythm. Lobatn, guitarist Walter Jocho Velasquez, and bassist Joscha Oetz engage in an introspective interplay, leading into Shew's melodic solo. Velasquez and Oetz establish a subdued vamp over a Lando rhythm on *Summertime* which Alegria contrasts with a raucous interpretation of the classic Gershwin melody. Alegria uses his plunger mute and spacious phrasing to build an improvisation full of personality and bluesy power. The rhythm section supports Velasquez's solo with conversational responses and subtle dynamic shifts, while they melt into a cajon, guitar, and bass trio for Oetz's strong statement. Alegria and saxophonist Laurandrea Leguia gently present a lush melody over a colorful background on *Las Hijas Del Sol*, smoothly transitioning into a subdued solo from Velasquez. The group explores the open texture, allowing for spacious interplay, which Alegria enters as the main improviser. He builds into a strong dynamic, setting up a double time swing rhythm for keyboardist Russell Ferrantes' intensive improvisation. Lobatn improvises furiously on bongo throughout *Piano De Patio (Y Bongo)*, filling in spaces between the addictive groove and the rhythmically jagged melody. The rhythm section collectively improvises until Alegria bursts into a solo that pushes the flowing groove into a high-energy double

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time swing, inspiring Alegria into a frenzy of fast licks. After the group revisits the melody, Lobato returns with an impressive display of zapateo dancing, using his feet to create a strong groove and stunning solo licks. Alegria and his group display a powerful understanding of both jazz and Afro-Peruvian styles here, utilizing their knowledge to smoothly fuse the genres.

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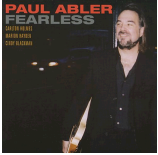
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