

GLOBE UNITY: BRAZIL



Imaginarium Clarice Assad (Adventure Music)
Ugandan Suite Felipe Salles (Tapestry)
Só - Brazilian Essence Romero Lubambo (Sunnyside)
 by Tom Greenland

Brazilian music and culture have had a deep and lasting impact on the rhythms, melodies, harmonies and timbres of jazz. Three native musicians, now active around New York, exemplify this impact.

Clarice Assad, from Rio de Janeiro, third generation musician of the Assad dynasty, isn't only a sought-after composer/arranger of progressive classical music but a terrifically talented jazz pianist and vocalist as well. *Imaginarium*, her fourth album, is a spicy smorgasbord of original works employing over 40 musicians and drawing on all of her influences. For example, "A Morte da Flor" begins impressionistically, only to turn operatic midway; "Why?" contains a recitative for three voices over a 5/4 vamp; and "Pássaros" opens with a marimba montuno only to end with a catchy hook over flute, birdcalls and tiered percussion. Assad's nuanced singing and distinctive scatting are heard to great effect on "De Perna Pro Ar", "Revolta das Flores" and "Dedezinha de Maiô". To her credit, her formidable musicianship doesn't detract from the intimacy and humor of her delivery.

Saxophonist Felipe Salles, from São Paulo, has been active in the US since 1995. *Ugandan Suite*, his sixth album, was inspired by a research trip to that African country and features saxophonist David Liebman and Ugandan musician Damascus Kafumbe on adungu (bow-harp), ndingidi (tube-fiddle), madinda xylophones and various native percussion instruments. Named for Africa's big five game animals, the album is really a suite of suites, each extended track having multiple sections that transition suddenly. The intricately layered percussion, employing many unusual colors without becoming overly dense, coupled with the catchy tunes, make this an easily accessible offering. Liebman's soloing on "The Elephant" and "The Rhinoceros", along with his improvised interactions with Salles elsewhere, are highpoints.

Guitarist Romero Lubambo, also from Rio, has been an active sideman on the US scene for nearly 30 years, mixing Brazilian fingerpicking styles with modern jazz vocabulary. *Só* ("alone"), his eighth CD and first solo outing, contains originals and covers of Tom Jobim, Mercer-Raksin and others. Thanks to deft technique, combined with a close-enough-for-jazz attitude towards making mistakes, the album flows with relaxed spontaneity, like overhearing someone jamming for private pleasure. Although occasional single-line passages add contrast, the music chiefly relies on lush, tuneful, lithely modulated chord melodies, suggesting a full sax section improvising together.

For more information, visit adventure-music.com, sallesjazz.com and sunnysiderecords.com. Lubambo is at Dizzy's Club Aug. 19th-24th and 26th-31st, all with Trio da Paz. See Calendar.



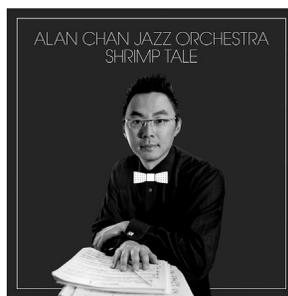
Caminando con Papi
Pete Rodríguez (Destiny)
 by Elliott Simon

Pete "El Conde" Rodríguez was the voice of the hottest salsa on the planet from the '60s through his untimely passing in 2000. *Caminando con Papi* (Walking With Daddy) is a well-conceived tribute from his son and musical collaborator, trumpeter Pete Rodríguez. More than his musical style, El Conde's influence is in focus and it is a general statement on fatherhood distinguished by sophisticated arrangements and Rodríguez' cool sounding horn.

An earnest horn on the dramatically reworked "Tambo" gracefully mixes longing with hope. The tune begins with a soliloquy from Rodríguez' four-year-old daughter, which captures the child's innocent view of the father she knows and the grandfather she has come to know. Rodríguez has gathered a great band for this session and pianist Luis Perdomo's able hands are much in evidence. His arrangement of "Cabildo", another nugget from El Conde's catalogue, features an expressive Rodríguez vocal, which flows into his even more emotive horn. The self-penned title track is a delicate remembrance and joyful exploration of a father's relationship with his child. Perdomo is especially compelling here, skillfully combining with Rodríguez to expose conflicting emotions.

The eight remaining tunes are diverse modern jazz with a Latin tinge and, although keeping true to the overall feel, allow the band to take a few more chances. Percussionist Robert Quintero is at the center of a tight rhythm section with bassist Sam Pankey and drummer Daniel Dufour. Even on somewhat 'out' numbers like "Shut Up and Play your Horn", they set the groove while imbuing the lush ballad "It's Not Over Yet" with subtle shades. For closer "El Camaleon", the band magically change colors with both stark rhythmical contrasts and gradually shifting tonal tints. It is hard to believe that "El Conde" has been gone for close to 14 years. This is a touching and optimistic tribute.

For more information, visit destinyrecordsmusic.com. A tribute to Pete "El Conde" Rodríguez with the Cita Rodríguez Orchestra and guest Pete Rodríguez is at Damosch Park Aug. 3rd. See Calendar.



Shrimp Tale
Alan Chan Jazz Orchestra
(Crown Heights Audio Network)
 by George Kanzler

Hong Kong native and California resident Alan Chan doesn't approach the configuration of his Jazz Orchestra the way most big band leaders do. He creates unique soundscapes from melding, mixing and matching various instruments in the familiar reeds, brass and rhythm of his big band. This debut album reveals one of the most distinctive big band architects to come along since Maria Schneider and Darcy James

Argue. The music he creates resembles great paintings akin to Monet's gardens or Van Gogh's starry nights or the music of classical impressionists like Ravel or Debussy. Eschewing traditional song structures and conventional time/rhythm, Chan writes evocative tone poems. Some of his voicings and tones are so extraordinary at times you forget you are listening to a jazz big band, yet everything he creates comes from that basic instrumentation and tradition.

Each of the eight tracks on *Shrimp Tale* is indelibly singular. The opener, "Tsu Zu Ku (To Be Continued)", was inspired by Chan's bicycle rides in New York, the piece united by a click-like bike pedal rhythm as pointillist passages flit by from various ensemble voicings. Guest trumpeter Wayne Bergeron soars in the heroic toreador role on the title track, a reminiscence of Chan's time in Miami, mashing up salsa and a heavy dance groove with humor and wit in dazzling orchestral combinations. Diaphanous tonal colors pervade "A Spirit's Dream", a rhapsodic piece inspired by Chinese brush strokes on a painting of a female figure. "Moving To A New Capital", the longest track and album centerpiece, is a portrait of Beijing, which begins with a traditional Japanese Gagaku flute and tom tom melody, then evokes the teeming modern metropolis with rousing riffs and even a suggestion of honky-tonk tenor sax. Two tracks are musical settings for poems about Mexico by Elaine Cohen, one melodramatic, the other bright and mariachi perky. The Mexican influence is also paramount on the closing track, "Rancho Calaveras", a swing-band inspired Tex-Mex polka enlivened by clarinet and banjo solos and a rousing march climax.

For more information, visit alanchanmusic.com. This project is at ShapeShifter Lab Aug. 4th. See Calendar.



"This is one of the best progressive music I have heard in a long time. What a great blend of classical music, African music and Jazz! The compositions and the arrangements are so well done, and in the most natural way. This music needs to be heard by the largest audience possible."
Lionel Loueke

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