

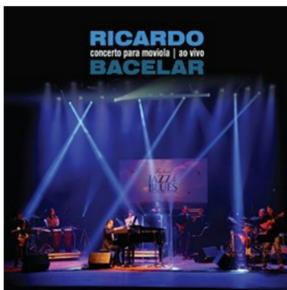
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## MUSIC REVIEWS: RICARDO BACELAR – ‘CONCERTO PARA MOVIOLA’ AND CHICAGO JAZZ PHILHARMONIC – ‘HAVANA BLUE’

Jon Sobel June 22, 2016 Comments Off 237 Views

**Ricardo Bacelar** and his octet pay tribute to jazz fusion and Brazilian classics on their new live CD *Concerto para Moviola*. After a moody intro piece by Bacelar, the set gets going with two tunes that take me back to my junior high school jazz ensemble days in the 1970s: a canny, unusually circumspect version of Weather Report’s classic “Birdland,” and the rubbery funk of Quincy Jones’s brassy, poppy arrangement of the Benny Golson classic “Killer Joe.”

Devoted to jazz fusion of the era, the first part of the album also includes Pat Metheny’s “So May It Secretly Begin,” The Yellowjackets’ “March Majestic,” and a real surprise, a smoky concert-jazz arrangements of the 1968 hit “The Windmills of Your Mind” with standout solo work from guitarist Ronaldo Pessoa, Bacelar on keyboards, Marcio Resende on sax, and violinist Marcus Vinicius Cardoso.



Recorded last year at the Guarariranga Jazz and Blues Festival in Brazil, the disc shifts into Brazilian gear after a chewily rhythmic version of Horace Silver’s “Señor Blues,” featuring a bracing synthesizer solo, and a couple of Bacelar originals that are a little too syrupy for my taste. But Bacelar’s flowing pianistic style, sometimes calling Joni Mitchell to mind, is just right for the gentle “Palhaço,” which skitters into a lively *baião*.

Some of the other Brazilian selections come across too shy – not enough Brazil and too much Miami Beach, neither daring nor deeply rootsy. Of course, that’s an objection one could have fairly made to a lot of jazz fusion back in the day, and this is, to some extent, a tribute album.

Jobim’s “Água de Beber” has solid energy and rhythmic bite, and “Naná” carries a sense of groovy novelty fun. The disc closes with a rocking version of Chick Corea’s “Blue Miles” featuring slinky work from Miquéias dos Santos on the electric bass, reminding me of the great work of Jaco Pastorius, who of course helped define fusion in the first place.

Also with a south-of-the-border concert jazz vibe is a fine new album from **Orbert Davis’s Chicago Jazz Philharmonic**. The first seven tracks of *Havana Blue* comprise a concert suite composed (except for one brief movement) by trumpeter and conductor Davis. The genre-crossing music is continuously interesting and moving, the playing virtuosic without showing off.

Dense, dark harmonies, plenty of percussion, and dance rhythms (the live performance included choreography) evoke cinematic romance and intrigue (the swirling “Sabor”), rhythmic complexity (“Congri”), lazy lonesome nights (“Solteras”), a classical concert by the water (the string quartet in “El Malecon,” the sprightly woodwinds of “El Fin Te Vi”), and a lively Cuban nightclub where folk music and jazz drink a toast (“Havana at Twelve”). Davis’s own work on trumpet and flugelhorn is especially inspiring. The only flaw in the recording is that the congas were mixed too high.

Leaving behind the 19-piece orchestra, Davis closes the album with four small-ensemble studio tracks, contributing brilliant solo work on Jobim’s airy “Chega de Saudade.” (Cuba, Brazil – what’s the difference if the music is good?) Various soloists open up an old favorite of mine, again from junior high jazz ensemble: Dizzy Gillespie’s groovylicious “Manteca.”

The dual trumpet/flugelhorn solo at the end of “Orlando’s Walk” is a fitting blast of fireworks to top off the pair of tangy Latin-jazz originals at the end of this thoroughly engaging journey. *Havana Blue* is a musical carnival that stimulates the mind and the senses alike.



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### ABOUT JON SOBEL



Jon Sobel is Publisher and Executive Editor of Blogcritics as well as lead editor of the Culture & Society section. As a writer he contributes most often to Culture, where he reviews NYC theater; he also covers interesting music releases in various genres. Through Oren Hope Marketing and Copywriting at <http://www.orenhope.com/> you can hire him to write or edit whatever marketing or journalistic materials your heart desires. Jon also writes the blog Park Odyssey at <http://parkodyssey.blogspot.com/> where he visits every park in New York City. And by night he’s a part-time working musician: lead singer, songwriter, and bass player for Whisperado, a member of other bands as well, and a sideman.

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