

DOWNBEAT

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Pablo Ablanedo Octet

Alegria

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★★★★½

With his latest effort, Argentine pianist/composer Pablo Ablanedo pronounces a sense of joy. In the liners the artist emphasizes that this work, “alludes to the happiness of creation.” To that end, Ablanedo and his octet disseminate a set of emotive musings via a Spanish-tinted luster combined with polychordal horn charts and more. He indisputably conveys a sense of optimism throughout these superbly constructed theme pieces—often complemented with a symphonic edge—and memorably tuneful arrangements.

Featuring trumpeter Taylor Haskins’ echo-laden preludes, guitarist Ben Monder’s mid-toned preludes, guitarist Ben Monder’s mid-toned lines and the band’s gallant rendering of Ablanedo’s bravado-style horn charts, *Alegria* is partly about contrasts. Ablanedo serenades life within these multi-hued works, awash with sultry Mediterranean motifs and fused with elements of tango and stately choruses.

Drummer Franco Pinna emulates castanets in support of Haskins’ trumpet solo on “Una Mas,” as the band minces discreet elements of flamenco with modern jazz



inclinations. And there lies the beauty of it, as Ablanedo triumphantly bridges the gap between classically oriented austerity, Spanish romance and persuasive, jazz-based ruminations. With

“La Vida Sigue,” the band engages in a contrapuntal-type ostinato vibe interrelated with punctual horn charts and lamentable interludes.

Equally important is the leader’s incorporation of climactic overtures in concert with bustling jazz grooves and stunningly attractive melodies. In addition, the soloists often engage in chirpy dialogue, amid heated movements and supple flows. With his second release, Ablanedo’s personalized colloquialisms shine forth in a grand way.

—Glenn Astarita

Alegria: Alegria; La Procesión; Una Mas; Coral; Espiritu Mágico; Lux; El Grito Sagrado; La Vida Sigue; Naif; Y Así Se Va. (78:33)

Personnel: Pablo Ablanedo, piano, voice (7); Jenny Scheinman, violin; Taylor Haskins, trumpet, flugelhorn; Anat Cohen, clarinet, (1, 2, 3, 10); Chris Cheek, Jerome Sabbagh, tenor and soprano saxophones; Ben Monder, electric guitar; Fernando Huergo, electric bass; Franco Pinna, drums, bombo leguero; Julio Santillan, acoustic guitar (3, 5); Ernesto Klar, electronics (7).

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