

Jazz Dimentions (Germany)

Review of From Down There CD (2001)

Pablo Ablanedo Octet
From Down There
Fresh Sound FSNT 109

In describing the music of this CD, one could cite two words: suspenseful calm. The Pablo Ablanedo Octet doesn't rely on plain musical effects - the listener is spellbound by an original synthesis of Modern Jazz and Latin music. Throughout the complexly orchestrated arrangements, horns and violin fuse into continually new colors of sound.

The recording starts out brisk with its title-track "From Down There", featuring interlocking melodic lines among saxophone (Anat Cohen) and trumpet (Avishai Cohen) - yet soon after the agitated mood calms down during "Para Dejar." Oscillating between two chords the piano enters first - later a trumpet solo, accompanied by guitar, emerges from the superimposed tender (but not at all feeble) violin-melody. Likewise, the following pieces tend to be rather subtle and unimposing: involved in their irregular rhythmicity as in "El Acecho," or just plain beautiful and contemplative like "La Viajera."

The only composition not penned by Pablo Ablanedo himself - Billy Strayhorn's "U.M.M.G" - receives equal prominence amongst the other tunes. Following a probing electric-bass introduction, small motivic themes are condensed by piano, violin and horns - excellent! The CD closes on a lyrical note with a solo-appearance by vocalist Katie Viqueira in a reprise of the fourth piece, "Dreaming."

What a pity that at this point the band is limiting their appearances to the Boston/New York region. Great that one can, until that will change, at least listen to this CD.

- Frank Bongers