



2009 Latin Jazz Next Generation Artist: “Descarumbiando”

Hamlet & His Latin Jazz Experience.



Sometimes an artist appears on the scene almost spontaneously and they grab attention from every angle. They seem to burst onto the music scene out of thin air with highly developed performance skills, refined compositions, and a wealth of stylistic knowledge. Their music earns an audience’s ears, and they like what they hear - despite a lack of an early connection, the mystery artist gains a number of fans on the merit of their music. We’ve come to accept this type of magical arrival, and somehow we overlook the realities of the situation; although an artist might be a new face to us, they arise from their own local scene after years of hard work. Every musician puts in their time through years of hard practice, extensive performance, and artistic experimentation. Their development occurs over the course of years, whether we witness their growth or not. Sometimes we simply meet an artist after they are well into their journey instead of discovering their music at the beginning of their travels. We get to enjoy the benefits of their hard work, experiencing a solid musical product.

American audiences got the thrill of discovering 2009 Latin Jazz Next Generation Artist Hamlet And His Latin Jazz Experience through their album Descarumbiando this past year. Based in Austria, the group brings together musicians from across Europe and around the world, mixing their varying influences into a unique blend. Led by Colombian pianist Hamlet Fiorilli, the group puts a distinctly different slant on the Latin jazz experience that shows a strong personality within the boundaries of tradition. Fiorilli grounds the group with a collection of interesting pieces, a solidly constructed improvisatory approach, and an energetic montuno. The title track, “Descarumbiano” interjects a funky edge into a set of jazz changes with traditional rhythms fueling improvisations from Fiorilli, trumpet player Hans Lassnig, and saxophone player Robert Friedl. Conguero Gianni Battilana introduces “El Fuego Del Padre” with some impressive soloing skills before the band charges into a syncopated minor melody and engaging improvisations. “Bluesambongo” mixes several different world as the band bounces between samba and songo, inspiring some enthusiastic solos from Fiorilli, Lassnig, Friedl, Battilana, and drummer Stefan Mörtel. The album contained a number of pleasant surprises for US audiences, that guarantees opens ears for more music from Hamlet And His Latin Jazz Experience.

By Chip Boaz (Latin Jazz Corner)