

Compositions Más Grande

Musical ambition comes in many flavors. The adage fits Latin music as much as any other genre. What would, say, the pioneering Cuban conguero Chano Pozo (who died in 1948) say if he could sample the spectrum of today's far-reaching variations of Afro-Cuban and Puerto Rican musical fare? We'll never know, but it's always worthwhile to check in on how Latin music has profoundly influenced jazz and vice versa. Some recent releases point to several directions, as well as affirming some of the root elements.

Composer/arranger **Hector Martignon** leads his Banda Grande through mostly original orchestrations on ***The Big Band Theory* (Zoho 201608; 71:31 ★★★★★½)**. The former Ray Barretto pianist is a harmonically adventurous writer whose multi-leveled pieces on this ambitious collection don't read as standard salsa. Vocalist Brenda Feliciano sings it straight on Bach's "Erbarme Dich," while the ensemble undulates with silken currents of strings and horns.

Martignon's "Trombone Chorale" was inspired by German street brass, and the take on Bill Evans' "Interplay" is far afield from his Nuyorican roots. But a clave beat will kick in on something like Bruno Martino's "Estate" and we're in the middle of a sea of sweaty bodies, dancing at a summer street fair in New York. It would take a concert hall to accommodate the orchestra here, but the audience would most certainly crave a dance floor.

Ordering info: zohomusic.com

Socrates Garcia's musical memoir, ***Back Home* (MAMA 1050; 52:39 ★★★★★½)**, recalls his youth in the Dominican Republic with fondness, gusto and introspection. His horn sections punch, counterpunch, interlock and float to the merengue rhythms. Pianist Manuel Tejada leads the churning rhythm section, but also adds pastel to lyrical tunes like "Celebration Of The Butterflies" and the title track.

This is also concert fare that's full of dance music sections and flourishes. Garcia's three-part "Dominican Suite For Jazz Orchestra" has some filigreed reed section work that is at once orchestral yet full of folkloric echoes. Like Martignon, he's a writer with substantial potential.

Ordering info: summitrecords.com

South Bronx bass master **Andy González** shows that he can dial the whole Puerto Rican ensemble esthetic down to small configurations on ***Entre Colegas* (Truth Revolution 538872; 50:12 ★★★★★)** without losing any of the essence. This album is a personal statement with



Hector Martignon

MICHIKO PENSA

plenty of low-key yet quietly intense playing. Whether it's the sacred-heart marriage of tres, bass and conga, a horn-stoked lineup or the amiable two-bass dialog with Luques Curtis (on "The Addams Family Theme"), these combinations pulsate and swirl with life.

González and his colleagues are full of surprises: Manuel Alejandro Carro's soulful vocals on the plaintive bolero "Sabor A Mi" sets the table for "Dialysis Blues," a guitar-driven jam whose title refers to the leader's health challenges of late. The rhythmic conflagration "Inspiración De Cachao" is an exciting percussive buffet, and Carlos Adabie's out-of-tempo trumpet feature on Billy Strayhorn's "A Flower Is A Lovable Thing" is an intimate statement that veers from desultory to dejection.

Ordering info: truthrevolutionrecords.com

Chano Pozo definitely would have dug the roiling rhythms on ***Mac Gollehon & The Hispanic Mechanics* (True Groove; 53:41 ★★★★★½)**, though possibly not the textures. This Molotov cocktail of electronica, clave, *Bitches Brew* funk and flat-out brass playing is intelligent disco.

Gollehon, a trumpeter and trombonist, has cleverly assembled pungent, rhythm-rooted dance music from start to finish, made on what sounds like every gadget at The NAMM Show. He displays a fat tone, saucy ideas and a touch of Echoplex on the comparatively mild "Exito Obscuridad," then duets with himself on a tape loop on "Dale Jamon." It might not be everyone's cup of tea, but Gollehon always goes for it, never playing it safe.

DB

Ordering info: truegroove.nyc

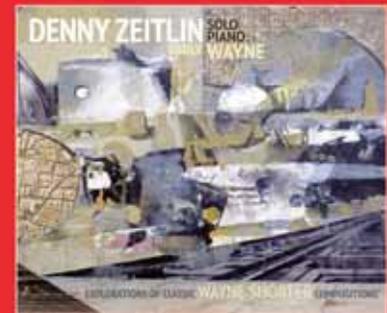


CARLOS FRANZETTI ARGENTUM

SSC 1454 - IN STORES NOW

The musical world of composer/pianist Carlos Franzetti is vast but his love and appreciation of the music of his birthplace, Argentina, has led him to become one of the foremost experts and exponents of tangos, chacareras, zambas and other Argentinean folkloric forms. His new recording, *Argentum*, showcases his adept handling of the various types of music from a diverse cast of Argentinean composers, including a few compositions of his own, all in intimate combo settings.

For *Argentum*, Franzetti has arranged a number of pieces written by well known composers, such as Astor Piazzolla, as well as works by lesser known composers, all for small ensembles led by his own exemplary piano playing.



DENNY ZEITLIN EARLY WAYNE

EXPLORATIONS OF CLASSIC WAYNE COMPOSITIONS

SSC 1454 - IN STORES July 8

It was an opportunity for a live solo performance that inspired Zeitlin to focus on Wayne Shorter's music for this project. Zeitlin chose to play some of Shorter's early compositions for his December 5, 2014 performance at the esteemed Piedmont Piano Company in Oakland, California. The majority of the pieces come from the early 1960s, with "Ana Maria" coming from the 1970s. The performance was recorded, preserving Zeitlin's intriguing takes on these classic compositions.



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