

you can be a trouper.' I guess I always choose to be a trouper." About the music on this, her third album, Tasha says "I always bring a soul element, and this record also has a touch of Nashville, which was a new thing for me to explore. ...and overall this record has more of my blues side exposed, from subject matter to musicianship. It also inspires some dancing, so be ready for that!"

Tasha sings with a voice that is soulful, yet soothing as honey as she launches into a solid dance groove with full brassy horns backing her vocal on "Feels So Good" when a relationship is over, and followed by "Wedding Bells," set against a Stax type backing with an insistent groove as she keeps hearing wedding bells yet wondering when they will be for her, while guitar and tenor sax helps frame the vocal. Keb' Mo adds backing vocal to "Family Tree," with a loping groove and a vocal plea for a relationship to grow.

"One and Only" is a terrific soul ballad that evokes classic Otis Redding in the manner of the performance and Taylor's singing. Robert Randolph's stinging lap steel enlivens Taylor's story telling on "Little Miss Suzie," while "How Long" is a rocker where she sings about this gentleman "how long are you gonna wait, if you wait to long, you just might be too late. A hint of reggae is present on "That Man," as she sings about dancing too slow and if Tasha does it wrong, he'll be the first to let her know. Samantha Fish guests on "Leave That Dog Along," adding her guitar (including a fiery guitar solo) and supporting vocal on this blues.

Tasha Taylor's vocals are like "Honey on a Biscuit." It says so much as her as a vocalist and producer of this remarkable recording that the guests here are simply seasoning to the robust and soulful musical stew here. Certainly this is a name that we will be hearing much more of.

Ron Weinstock



HECTOR MARTIGNON'S BANDA GRANDE

The Big Band Theory

ZOHO MUSIC

As Hector Martignon writes "Should you be insane enough to want to start a Big Band.... do it in New York! ... It was at that veteran of all venerable old Manhattan venues, the Nuyorican Poets Cafe in the Lower East Side, where my flirts with the Big Band format became a love affair, with all its challenges and intricacies.

Starting off as an experimental workshop, with personnel, compositions and arrangements varying every week, some suitable for the dance needs of the crowd and some suitable for a full concert, Hector Martignon's Banda Grande slowly but surely came of age."

"The 20 or so instrumentalists provides a composer and arranger with a wide palette of musical colors and styles which are explored here, 'from the Baroque *sinfonia concertante*, visiting the inquiring language of the sixties' and seventies' Jazz, to the Brazilian eccentricities of a Hermeto Pascoal, adding, of course, my own honest attempts at composing and arranging." Budgetary and space issues forced him "to divide the recording into four sessions, each of which left (almost) untouched: 1. rhythm section plus some soloists, 2. horns, 3. strings and 4. some solo overdubs."

The breath of his musical ambitions is heard early on in the opening "Hell's Kitchen Sarabande," with its contrasting musical colors set against a Latin-infused funky groove that celebrates Hell's Kitchen's strangely alluring decay before it became an extension of the touristy Times Square. There is marvelous alto sax (Alex Han?) heard here set against a surging background, followed by Andy Hunt's gruff but melodic trombone. The salsa flavored "99 Macdougall Street" was inspired by a year living on that Village street and was written while a member of Ray Barretto's New World Spirit. The leader's piano, Samuel Torres's percussion and Christos Rafalides's vibraphone, along with David De Jesus' hard bop styled alto sax stand out on this multi-layered performance that shifts from salsa to straight hard bop.

Martignon's creation of interesting instrumental voicings is also displayed on the rendition of the bossa standard of Bruno Martino, "Estate," with the leader playing accordion along with Christos Rafalides's vibraphone underpinning Chris Washburne's trombone along with tenor sax by Chelsea Baratz, with the leader's arrangement providing a swirling setting for the strong solo statements and the fresh take on this classic. This lively rendition is followed by songs inspired by his stay in Germany and the Christmas markets there. Groups of trombones playing Christmas songs there inspired "Trombone Chorale with its integration of a string quartet with the big band sonorities and all the four members of the trombone section are spotlighted. Similarly, bridging the classical and jazz worlds is a standard of European Sacred Music, "Erbarne Dich," one of the most haunting Arias (No. 47) out of the St. Matthew Passion by J.S. Bach, with an alto vocal by Brenda Feliciano.

A playful rendition of Bill Evans' "Interplay" has muted trumpets while Enrique Fernández' baritone helps anchor the performance with solos from Chelsea Baratz on tenor sax, John Benitez on bass, Vince Cherico on drums and Samuel Torres on congas and maracas. Martignon observes "Nostalgias del Futuro is the first movement of a "Concerto for Harp and Orchestra" I wrote for my fellow Colombian and harp