

by Bill Milkowski

DAVID REINHARDT TRIO

COLOMBE (Cristal)



Playing against expectations, given that his grandfather was the one and only Django Reinhardt, the 26-year-old guitarist David Reinhardt

pursues a modern direction more informed by bebop, bossa nova, funk and fusion than by the Hot Club of France. With Hammond B3 organist Florent Gac and drummer Yoann Serra in tow, he opens with a gentle fingerstyle ballad, "Lady," before segueing into the edgy B3 burner "XV," which carries a hint of the original Tony Williams Lifetime trio. The relaxed swinger "A Fool's Errand" features Reinhardt delivering warm, Wes Montgomery-style octaves, and he reserves his most lyrical playing for Ivan Lins' mellow "Aparecida." The title track, an uptempo swinger dedicated to Reinhardt's grandmother, features his boldest hard-bop-fueled lines, and "Melina's Theme" has him playing funky rhythm guitar à la Jimmy Nolen from James Brown's band. Reinhardt also turns in a briskly swinging take on Jimmy Van Heusen's "Here's That Rainy Day" and an unaccompanied acoustic reading of the poignant "Love Theme From Spartacus."

GIANNI BARDARO

SOUL BLUEPRINT (Emarcy/Universal)



Italian alto saxophonist-composer Gianni Bardaro showcases his considerable chops and penchant for writing difficult material on

his fifth project as a leader. The turbulent "Neffertiti" (not the Wayne Shorter composition) exhibits his laser-sharp precision on challenging unisons with pianist Francesco Cali and bassist Andreas Hatholt, along with a freeblowing solo that swings forcefully as it tips into edgier territory. The angular "Dav" recalls some of Steve Coleman's experiments with flowing over intricate time-signature shifts. Special guest Randy Brecker appears on "Il Tempio Della Nuvola Bianca," which opens with fugue-like flourishes between trumpet and alto, then resolves to sparse balladic playing that highlights his lyrical flugelhorn work. Brecker offers some scintillating muted trumpet on the exhilarating "Against" and engages in a lively three-way conversation with Bardaro and conguero Samuel Torres on the rhythmically charged, Afro-Cuban-flavored "Illegal." Bardaro's most lyrical playing comes on the warm ballad "Into."



▲ Hot Club of Himself: David Reinhardt

He closes with an alto onslaught, nonchalantly double-timing on "A Slow Walk to No-Action." Stateside jazz fans need to know about this exceptional talent.

JEFF DENSON

SECRET WORLD (Between the Lines)



A founding member of Minsarah, the Brooklyn-based trio probably best known for its collaborations with Lee Konitz, accomplished bassist-composer Jeff Denson delivers 10 original gems on this precious quartet offering. The kindred personnel here are heavy: Ralph Alessi on trumpet, drummer Dan Weiss and Minsarah's Florian Weber on piano. From the driving opener, "Rise," with adventurous solos from Denson, Alessi and Weiss, to the somber "Autumn Song," showcasing Denson's haunting vocals, to the twisting groove and harmonic extrapolation on

"Not Another Moment's Thought," this outing bristles with intelligence and passionate, unbridled improvisation.

The leader's superb bowing is showcased on the dark, time-shifting "Where the Water Moves." The lightly swinging 3/4 number "Merry-Go-Round" opens on a more mainstream note before gradually morphing into avant territory. Denson's artfully crafted *Horizon Suite: Setting Sun/Dusk/Nightfall* traverses an array of moods, and the album closes with the dynamic, funk-laden "Dance of a Bittersweet Victory," with Weber doubling on melodia.

CHRISTIAN ESCOUDÉ

CHRISTIAN ESCOUDÉ PLAYS BRASSENS:

AU BOIS DE MON COEUR (Sunmystide)



The late poet, musician and political activist George Brassens began performing his affecting songs after