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Electrifying combinations in the jazz idiom |

Jazz in town | by Miguel Bronfman

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CULTURE & ENTERTAINMENT

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Electrifying combinations in the jazz idiom

JAZZ IN TOWN

BY MIGUEL BRONFMAN
FOR THE HERALD

Pianist Paula Shocron and electric guitar player Marcelo Gutfraind will present their brand new album tonight, together with drummer Carto Brandan, double-bassist Julián Montauti (members of the Shocron-Gutfraind Quartet) and, guesting in, sax player Pablo Puntoriero, who also performs in the album on two tracks.

Recorded in August, 2005, *Percepciones* (Perceptions), released by the Rosario, Santa Fe-based label Blue Art Records, is an incredibly rich album that achieves the very difficult goal (so unusual these days plagued by industrial music) of combining complex yet beautiful and spiritual music, rendered by gifted musicians in complete communion with a collective idea.

All the music was composed by the quartet's co-leaders (five pieces by Shocron, two by Gutfraind), proving not only their maturity as composers despite their youth, but also their ability to grasp, within the modern jazz idiom, those subtle particularities which makes their music sound definitely Argentine, avoiding in the process any cliché or even an overt crossover effect.

Gutfraind's *Seven Down* opens the album in a rather calm mood, though his edgy guitar solo prepares the listener for what is about to come. *Bronce*, by Shocron, follows, with the magnificent presence of Pablo Puntoriero on tenor saxophone (he also appears on another Shocron number, the beautiful ballad *Caleidoscopio* that closes the record). With a personality all his own, he brings on candid reminiscences of Charlie Rouse, for many years in the 50s and 60s Thelonious Monk's tenor player.

And this association should come as no surprise, for the great pianist and composer has an overall presence in Shocron's playing (in her debut, solo piano album, *La*



Paula Shocron at the piano.

voz que te lleva, she rendered exquisite versions of three classic Monk compositions), as evident in *Vuelve viento* or *Lejanías*, where she manages, with absolute spontaneity, to integrate tinges of Monk with a *chacarera* and her other (declared) influence, the late Cuchi Leguizamón.

Señales de humo, by Gutfraind, opens with mysterious evocations through a meditative solo by Montauti, and then gradually gives place to a frenzied collective improvisation, the whole quartet stretching the harmonies and the rhythm to reach a free-jazz climax after which, commanded by Gutfraind's cerebral solo, everybody calms down.

While Gutfraind has a very neat sound and an effective manner to

build his solos, with gradual intensity and brainy lines, Shocron seems to be always ready to deliver a refreshing, contagious energy, full of swing and rhythmic dynamics, with the melodies pouring endlessly out of the piano. All of this makes her an outstanding player. Although the quartet shines here as a team, she certainly finds a perfect partner in the creative drumming of Carto Brandan, who, from amid all his resources, finds the perfect balance between sound and silence.

For those who still wonder if there is such a thing as "Argentine jazz," get *Percepciones*: an elegant, intense and honest work that will undoubtedly please those who are familiar with these musicians and their music, and which will

also surprise and gratify those who haven't met them yet.

The Shocron-Gutfraind Quartet will play today at 9.30pm, at Jazz Voyeur Club, Posadas 1557.

CREATIVE TRIO

Three of the most relevant musicians from the vernacular scene join forces to form a trio with peculiar instrumentation. Drummer Pepi Taveira, tenor man Ricardo Cavalli and double-bass player Jerónimo Carmona confront their talents as free improvisers in a piano-less trio, a set that poses complex challenges when the moment to improvise comes.

But these same difficulties are also the gate to a much higher level of inventiveness and spontaneity, a sure bet in the hands of these musicians.

Tomorrow at 10pm at Thelonious, Salguero 1884.

THE AUSTRIAN CONNECTION

An active and prolific member of the European scene, Austrian saxophonist Karlheinz Miklin has become a regular visitor to Argentina for the last twenty years. Here he formed his own group, with which he recorded several albums (released in Europe) and made several tours in the Old Continent, a solid bridge between Austrian and Argentine musicians.

He is an original composer rooted in the modern jazz, avant-garde idiom. During his formative years, he played with such luminaries as Mel Lewis and Horace Parlan, and his current a trio is made up of himself, Ron McClure and drummer Billy Hart. His versatility allows him to move easily in several settings (trios, quartets and big bands), an interesting instrumentalist (he also plays clarinets and flutes) and a comprehensive musician.

This time he will offer two concerts with his quartet, Argentines Marcelo Mayor on guitar,

Alejandro Herrera on double and electric basses, and the legendary Pocho Lapouble on drums. Highly recommended.

Tuesday 18 and Wednesday 19 at 9pm at Notorious, Callao 966.

TWO SINGERS - TWO OPTIONS

One of them is successfully starting her career in jazz, while the other has been animating the blues and rock'n'roll scenes for the last twenty five years, and is now about to record a solo album.

María Puga Lareo is presenting her debut album, the auspicious *Body and Soul*, backed by a highly consistent trio led by the elegant Ricardo Lew on electric guitar, with Guillermo Delgado on double-bass and Roberto Núñez on drums. An intense singer with a delicate voice, she seems to get along well with the secrets of the jazz idiom. Puga Lareo will perform rearranged versions of classics like *All of Me*, *The Lady is a Tramp* and *Georgia On My Mind* (with special arrangement by Carlos Franzetti), and her own compositions, *Our Love Is*, *Addicted to You* and *I Have Fallen in Love*.

In a sabbatical period from the emblematic, charismatic group *Las Blaeanblus* (which she co-founded), singer, pianist and songwriter Cristina Dall, owner of a potent voice and a strong personal style moulded in the blues-song tradition, is getting ready for her next album as a leader, *Asunto mio*, already recorded and to be released soon. In an intimate atmosphere, she will sing and play in the company of Pablo Memi on double-bass and Leo Leonardi on drums.

María Puga Lareo performs today at 10.30pm at Te Mataré Ramirez, Primera Junta 702, San Isidro, Tel. 4747-8618. Cristina Dall will perform next Sunday 16 at 10.30pm at Club del Vino, Cabrera 4737.

Expanding our jazz frontiers

JAZZ IN TOWN

BY MIGUEL BRONFMAN
FOR THE HERALD

FIVE PIANISTS, FOUR ALBUMS

Four albums recently launched in the local market, covering four generations of pianists, reveal the intensity of the local jazz movement, and the healthy growth of the recording industry as far as Argentine jazz is concerned.

PIANO DUETS

Jorge Navarro joined forces with Guillermo Romero back in 2003, and together they recorded *Pianistas* (MDR Records) early this year, an album of piano jazz duets. Departing from Dave Brubeck's *In Your Own Sweet Way*, they embark together on joyful explorations of well-known classics and some originals too.

Both are great improvisers, and complement each other with natural ease in the treatment of these beautiful songs. As the title indicates, all the music was composed by piano players, so the album is really a tribute to that rich tradition of instrumentalists-composers, beginning with Fats Waller, continuing with Thelonious Monk, Chick Corea and Michel Petrucciani. Navarro's lifelong companion and friend, Baby López Furst (with whom Navarro formed a successful piano duo from 1997 to 2000, and recorded two albums) is also featured with two compositions, *Rumbita Coreana* and the delicate *Vals con Niebla*.

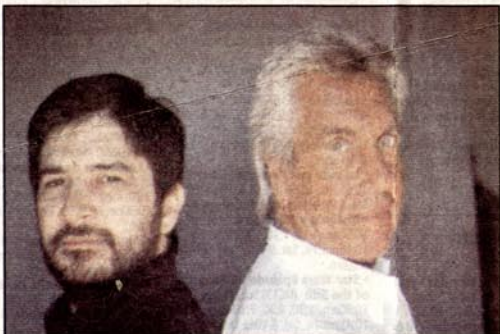
Navarro feels at home with this music, and his sense of swing remains unmatched throughout the whole album. Romero, who belongs to a younger generation of jazzmen, has consolidated a fluent and interesting style, and comes up as a powerful counterpart to Navarro's barrelling playing.

While Romero contributes with two originals, an old Navarro piece closes the album, the explosive up-tempo *El loco son ustedes*. Their counterpoint reaches its climax in this piece, and you can truly feel the excitement of two heartfelt players exchanging musical ideas.

ERNESTO JODOS

One of the most influential local pianists — and composers — of recent years, Ernesto Jodos' *Perspectiva* (S'Jazz-EMI) does nothing but confirm the great and prolific phase the pianist is going through. With two different rhythm sections, one made up of Jerónimo Carmona on bass and Carto Brandán on drums, and the other with Hernán Merlo and Segio Verdinelli, respectively, Jodos delivers eleven samples (eight of them composed by himself) of the most intellectual, brainy jazz you can expect these days.

His compositions are still in the same style of his previous works: rather complex melodic lines, full of tension but also with lyrical pas-



Guillermo Romero and Jorge Navarro.

sages of subtle beauty surround his work all over, immersed in difficult and modern harmonies, flirting at times with a free-jazz sound.

Enrique Norris on cornet and Alberto Garantón on tenor saxophone appear on three themes and their presence adds colours to a mostly introspective (but not calm at all) music.

This is not the typical jazz trio album with nice and quiet pieces you can listen to while doing something else. It is music that requires all your senses — particularly your mind — and that needs listening to with attention. After that challenge is surpassed, the pleasure comes.

PAULA SHOCRON

Two Jodos' alumni complete this fertile ground of Argentine jazz — young — pianists. Born in Rosario, Paula Shocron has been playing in the Buenos Aires scene for some years now, and last year recorded her first album as a leader, *La voz que te lleva* (Blue Art Records).

A solo piano album, it consists of material written by Shocron as well as personal renditions of tunes composed by the great Thelonious Monk, such as *Monk's Mood*, *Off Minor* and *Evidence*. "I think Monk is one of the great composers of the 20th Century, and certainly one of my favourites, if not the one. His music is not only beautiful and intricate and intelligent, but also embodies a certain vision of the future that makes it sound modern forty or fifty years later," Shocron told the *Herald*.

As for her own music, her initial influences — folk musicians she listened to as a child in her parents' home — subtly permeate through her straight jazz style, reaffirming her identity as an Argentine jazz pianist.

"In the same way I tried to pay homage to Monk and the US jazz tradition, I also pay tribute to musicians like Cuchi Leguizamón in my own compositions, although in a more implicit way," Shocron explains with enthusiasm.

She is presenting her album tonight and next Thursday, offering a solo piano set.

(Paula Shocron performs tonight and next Thursday at Notorious, Callao 966, at 9.30pm).

every tune and does a magnificent job — and bassists Mariano Otero and Horacio Fumero (each playing on four tracks), Lo Vuolo shows an astonishing command of his instrument and the music as well. Alternating standards and originals, Lo Vuolo has a moody, intense delivery that suits his introspective pieces (one dedicated to his girlfriend, the other to Jodos and the last one to his grandparents), but he can certainly swing when he chooses to do so, as in the up-tempo Cole Porter song *What is This Thing Called Love*.

Enrique Norris plays cornet on four tracks, illuminating with his bright sound the pieces Lo Vuolo dedicated to his beloved ones, and also shining in the — for this



Piano performer-composer Ernesto Jodos.

reviewer — best tune of the album, Monk's *Bemsha Swing*.

Four albums, five pianists of diverse styles but with a common — and accomplished — task: to keep expanding the jazz frontiers with originality, sincerity and high musical quality.