



Alex Bellegarde Quartet : Caminando

Paul Serralheiro, La Scena Musicale (page 44) September edition 2006

★★★★☆☆

“This recent quartet release, the fourth by this Montreal bassist, comes in the year following his winning the Grand Prize GM Competition at the Montreal International Jazz Festival. A very active musician around town, Bellegarde has taken a shine to Cuban music, a prominent fact on this disc, in which he performs his compositions with the help of a native-born pianist from that country, Yoël Diaz, and guest conga-player Orlando Lavielle, all of whom are ably supported by Erik Hove’s mellifluous alto sax and Yvon Plouffe on drums. Despite the Latin jazz connotations of the title track (which is taken from a verse by Spanish poet Antonio Machado), this album is happily eclectic in its grooves, moods and melodies...thankfully not just another trip on the Latin jazz bandwagon. The title tune is built up from a refreshingly simple ostinato figure and develops into a vigorous saunter, not a tiring high-octane chops-fest that can be so irritating about some Latin jazz. The only tune that dangerously skirts the genre’s clichés is ‘La Vaca’, but overall there is a pleasant variety here, including some hard-bop lines in ‘Got Lip’ and a Caravan-esque melody and vamp in ‘Native’. This is a mature release from a young dues paying player on Montreal’s effervescent jazz scene.”

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