



Zdenko Ivanusic Quartet

Free Fall

In late 2009 Zdenko Ivanusic, Zagreb jazz saxophonist (tenor, alto, soprano and flute) and composer, released *Free Fall*, his fourth album for Zivaldo Records. While not well-known in the U.S., Ivanusic has garnered well-deserved respect in Eastern Europe and praise for previous recordings such as 2007's *Lost in HTML* and particularly for the composition "Four Odd" from that album. He was also honored with the Third Annual Fame Games Effigy Award in 2009. Ivanusic has an extensive musical background and has been a force in Croatian contemporary music for 20 years as leader and sideman in jazz combos, as alto chair in the Croatian Army Symphonic Wind Orchestra and as lead alto in HGM Jazz Orchestra Zagreb. The other three members of the quartet, all active and prominent jazz musicians in Croatia and beyond, are: Elvis Penava, guitar; Borna Serçar, drums; and Zvonimir Bucevic Buc, bass. Ivanusic is accomplished on the entire family of saxophones, but on *Free Fall* we hear him exclusively on alto. The ten tracks contain tastes of free jazz, blues, fusion, New Orleans funk, and Latin in an overall mainstream jazz context.

Genre: Jazz
 Label: Zivaldo Records
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Tracks

1. Some Blue
2. Maestro M
3. Four to Go
4. Marching Roots
5. Mellow
6. Free Fall
7. Free Fall (Real Free)
8. Bizznezz
9. Samba FAQ
10. Happy Now

We are eased into the 10-track collection with a sparse jazz blues selection, "Some Blue." There are no extended, self-aggrandizing blues solos here, but rather each player takes an opportunity to introduce himself succinctly and tastefully. The second track, "Maestro M," could easily be the jazz quartet version of a Neville Brothers New Orleans funk jam. Here the listener is treated to more extended solos by Ivanusic and Penava, with Penava adding distortion effects and some funky wah-wah comping. Next up is a Latin jazz composition, "Four to Go." Ivanusic has greater opportunity to stretch out with a long fervid solo as does Penava following Ivanusic. Bucevic Buc, on bass, anchors the 5th track, "Mellow," laying a peripatetic bass line and also contributing a brief solo. The feel loosens up even more with track six, the title cut, "Free Fall." Ivanusic and Penava both have extended solos with Panava throwing some fusion into the mix using simultaneous distortion and wah-wah effects. The quartet reaches its most free form improvisational moments on one of the longest tracks on the CD, "Free Form (Real Free)." "Bizznezz" begins restoring a tighter structure to the set, starting out with a funk drum beat and giving bassist Bucevic Buc considerable exposure. After a straight-ahead samba ("Samba FAQ") the CD closes with a mainstream slow jazz composition, "Happy Now," featuring some impressive solo work by Penava.

Free Fall starts with a solid quartet of top-notch contemporary jazz musicians who take very good original material and then arrange that material in a logical, progressive and pleasing over-arching musical form to make a completely satisfying package. Both Ivanusic and Penava are talented soloists, Serçar is a polished, multi-faceted drummer, and Bucevic Buc, with his rock background, provides the solid steady low end to this very enjoyable quartet and highly recommended CD.



[Mike Reynolds](#) - MuzikReviews.com Staff

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