



- Lost in HTML

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Zdenko Ivanu - Lost in HTML (#220)

2008-08-06

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The fall of the USSR in 1991 and resultant dissolution of Yugoslavia have resulted in a groundswell of musical creativity that's becoming increasingly apparent to the rest of the western world. In many cases, music has gone from underground subversion to mainstream art form--good news for the musicians and, based on Croatian saxophonist Zdenko Ivanušić's *Lost in Html*, good for everyone. A versatile player as comfortable on alto as he is on tenor, Ivanušić covers a surprising breadth of musical territory here, ranging from sweet, straight-ahead jazz to the Latin-informed, odd-metered modern mainstream and even a taste of funk and go-go.

While the music is written by Ivanušić (with the exception of electric bassist/drum programmer Robert Lajić's ambling "Replay Blues"), the more down-the-center material feels both timeless and as if it's already a part of the standards repertoire. The samba-esque "Here and There" features Ivanušić on tenor, his tone referencing Sonny Rollins on a solo that navigates the song's dense changes with ease. "Done" shifts into a contemporary jazz space, but avoids the trappings of smooth jazz, despite Lajić's drum program; closer in tone to Stanley Turrentine or, perhaps, the late Grover Washington Jr.'s cross-over jazz, with guitarist Ante Prgin and a soft horn section featuring trumpeter Antonio Geček, baritone saxophonist Andrej Henigman and Ivanušić's own layered horns.

After the decidedly traditional "Replay Blues" and Latin-esque "Bigwig," the latter another changes-rich tune but this time featuring Ivanušić' on alto, the music turns to modern mainstream. The 7/4-metered "Four Odd" possesses a persistent, Dave Holland-like groove courtesy of acoustic bassist Goran Rukavina, though drummer Bruno Domiter approaches the tune with a lighter touch than either of Holland's recent drummers, Billy Kilson and Nate Smith. The title track, with Robert Lajić back on electric bass, hits harder and, despite the drum programming, feels completely natural and more akin to Holland's recent quintet discs. Geček takes a melody-centric solo, with Ivanušić' s scored horn arrangement pushing the transition to his own tenor feature, comfortably moving in and out of the harmonic center of the song's unshakable groove and delivering his strongest solo of the set. The song builds inevitably; demonstrating just how much can be done with a repetitive, odd-metered riff and lengthy vamp.



Ivanušić returns to all-acoustic, traditional territory for the lovely ballad, "Always My Love," gently swinging "Simple Waltz" (a feature for pianist Davor Ded ić) and more energetic yet uncannily relaxed "Light-Hearted," where Ivanušić's tenor carries the tune with another powerful solo.

"Lost in Html Remix" closes with a reprise of the title track's effervescent groove but, with a busier, go-go drum program, keyboard washes and brighter feel, makes clear that Ivanušić is an artist with one foot firmly planted in the past while looking forward into the future. It's an appropriate closer to an eclectic album that has the potential to draw traditionalists into the present (and, perhaps, the future), while giving fans of more contemporary jazz the chance to appreciate the value of knowing where the music comes from in order to move it further ahead.

Visit [Zdenko Ivanušić](#) on the web.

Personnel: Zdenko Ivanušić: alto saxophone (2, 4-7, 10), tenor saxophone (1-3, 6, 8-10); Davor Ded ić: keyboards and piano (1-5, 7-9); Goran Rukavina: acoustic bass (4, 5, 7-9); Bruno Domiter: drums (4, 5, 7-9); Robert Lajić: electric bass and drum programming (1-3, 6, 10); Antonio Geček: trumpet (2, 3, 6, 10); Andrej Henigman: baritone saxophone (2, 3, 6, 10); Ante Prgin: electric guitar (2).

Tracks: Here and There; Done; Replay Blues; Bigwig; Four Odd; Lost in Html; Always My Love; Simple Waltz; Light-Hearted; Lost in Html Remix.

Review by John Kelman