

CD Reviews: Zdenko Ivanusic, "Lost In HTML"

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By: Edward Blanco

A dynamic member of the Croatian music scene since the 1990, saxophonist and composer, Zagreb-born Zdenko Ivanusic, from Croatia, releases his second album on the Zivaldo label with "Lost In HTML," containing a repertoire of ten exciting new original material that blends the straight ahead jazz style with a sprinkle of hard bop and a shade of jazz fusion/funk. The result is a pretty impressive session of music that will satisfy your hunger for some upbeat swing and quench you thirst for a sip of the contemporary and mellow sounds.

Ivanusic plays the alto and tenor here and is accompanied by seven fellow countrymen.

They include Davor Dedec (keyboards and piano), Goran Rukavina (acoustic bass), Bruno Domiter (drums), Robert Lajic (electric bass and drums), Antonio Gecek (trumpet), Andej Henigman (baritone sax) and Ante Prgin (electric guitar).

As I listened to this disc I could not place my favorite cut because in fact there were several tunes that stand out beginning with the opener, "Here and There" where Ivanusic immediately establishes himself with a very pronounced tenor solo. Striking a decidedly hip tone with a blues-shaded rhythm, the group swings on "Replay Blues" and then rolls through a terrific melody on the short but sweet "Bigwig."

The leader provides space for members to showcase their talents as in "Four Odd" where he steps aside and allows pianist Dedec some tender moments and drummer Domiter to close out the tune. The fusion/funk jazz takes over on the title track with trumpeter Gecek blowing hard, Ivanusic on alto and Henigman weighing in on the baritone. This continues on the finale "Lost In HTML Remix," which almost seems like an encore performance to the title piece.

Perhaps the mellowest cut here is the beautiful and soft "Always My Love," played gently by pianist Dedec and later engaged by Ivanusic on slow burning solo. Two other notable tunes here are "Simple Waltz," and very bouncy "Light-Hearted."

"Lost In HTML" is truly an unexpected musical treasure, a gem of a recording if I ever heard one. Zdenko Ivanusic may not be familiar to the average jazz audience, but this album, his clever charts and a marvelous performance on the reeds, has succeeded in winning over this jazz critic after only one listen.

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