



RICHARD GALLIANO
Sentimentale

Richard Galliano, accordion; Tamir Hendelman, piano; Anthony Wilson, acoustic & electric guitar; Carlitos Del Puerto, bass; Mauricio Zottarelli, drums

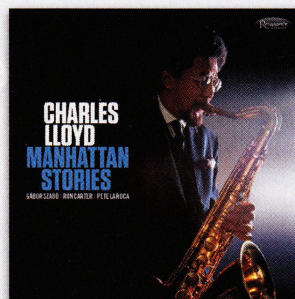
Resonance RCD-1021 (CD). 2014. George Klabin, prod.; Fran Gala, eng. DDD. TT: 66:21

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★

SONICS ★★★★★

A French jazz accordion virtuoso who's also recorded classical and Brazilian music, Richard Galliano mixes jazz standards with Brazilian pop on his latest release, which features an international group of jazz journeymen recruited by producer George Klabin. Only three of the 12 tracks are up-tempo, and the prevailing mood is poignantly romantic, in keeping with the album's title. Galliano displays a highly expressive technique, but the other musicians are merely facile, playing with sleek proficiency. The material, arranged by pianist Tamir Hendelman, is given a straight-ahead treatment with a slight fusion tinge, which suits the newer compositions better than it does Ellington's classic "In a Sentimental Mood," though it nicely complements the up-tempo hard-bop oldie "The Jody Grind," adapted here from a vocal version by Dee Dee Bridgewater rather than from Horace Silver's original.

One of the most successful adaptations is of another up-tempo tune, Chick Corea's "Armando's Rumba," which opens the album in sprightly style, with solid solos from the band members. On the dreamier side, "Canto Invierno," originally a taut duet between Dave Grusin and Lee Ritenour, receives a respectfully respectful interpretation. There are also two Galliano originals, including the previously unrecorded "Lili," performed as a shimmering duet with guitarist Anthony Wilson. The album's only false note is in Coltrane's "Naima," for which Wilson affects an electric-sitar tone. All in all, it's pleasant but not profound. —Larry Birnbaum



CHARLES LLOYD
Manhattan Stories

Charles Lloyd, saxophone, flute; Gábor Szabó, guitar; Ron Carter, bass; Pete La Roca Sims, drums
Resonance HCD-2016 (2 CDs). 2014. Zev Feldman, Dorothy Darr, prods.; George Klabin, Fran Gala, mix, editing, restoration. ADD. TT: 84:52

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★

SONICS ★★★★★

The two discs in this package capture two very different musical experiences, both the work of one band in peak form. Rising saxophonist Charles Lloyd would soon transition to his hugely successful *Forest Flower* quartet with Keith Jarrett, but these long-buried New York recordings from 1965 offer the only live documentation of a lineup heard on his Columbia studio albums *Of Course* and *Nirvana*. Gábor Szabó, on amplified acoustic guitar, gives an almost skronky, rock-edged textural underpinning to the music, while bassist Ron Carter and drummer Pete La Roca Sims groove hard and navigate every subtle compositional turn.

Resonance label head George Klabin, back in his WKCR-FM days, taped the performance on disc 1 in the proper uptown venue Judson Hall. The sound is clean and powerful, with three tracks of significant length and exploratory fervor. Disc 2, from Lloyd's personal archive, finds the same band at Slugs' Saloon, in the East Village. This one is dirty and raw, like the venue itself. La Roca's cymbals lack clarity and the mix is unbalanced, but what matters is the mystical energy coursing through the three tracks, including a repeat of Szabó's vamp-driven "Lady Gabor" with Lloyd on flute.

The 34-page booklet includes a Q&A with Lloyd, as well as reflections from Michael Cuscuna, Don Heckman. For insight into the early playing of one of jazz's living masters on such signature pieces as "Sweet Georgia Bright" and "Dream Weaver," *Manhattan Stories* is a remarkable find.

—David R. Adler



MARCIN WASILEWSKI TRIO
WITH JOAKIM MILDER
Spark of Life

Marcin Wasilewski, piano; Slawomir Kurkiewicz, bass; Michal Miskiewicz, drums; Joakim Milder, tenor saxophone
ECM 2400 (CD). 2014. Manfred Eicher, prod.; Stefano Amerio, eng. DDD. TT: 73:49

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★

SONICS ★★★★★

In 2002, on his ECM album *Soul of Things*, Tomasz Stanko introduced to the world a young, unknown Polish rhythm section. Marcin Wasilewski, Slawomir Kurkiewicz, and Michal Miskiewicz sounded tasteful and intelligent but cautious, perhaps awed to be playing with their country's most important jazz musician.

That rhythm section has now become one of the great piano trios of the new millennium. They pursue a concept of impressionism devoid of sentimentality, based on fresh, unyielding melodic forms and unsettling harmonies. Lead and support roles shift moment to moment within the ensemble, seamlessly. There is a guest here, Joakim Milder. He belongs: His tenor saxophone sounds like Wasilewski's piano in an alternate voice of yearning.

Wasilewski writes piercing songs. "Austin" is a hovering state of sadness that never resolves. "Spark of Life" is performed in two variations. What they share, before they become separate journeys, is a melody like a whisper of the soul. These two compositions establish a particular rapt atmosphere into which the other tracks flow. This band's culture is so strong that it can assimilate material from a Polish grunge-rock group, Hey, and a contemporary classical composer, Grażyna Bacewicz. When they cover Sting's "Message in a Bottle" or Krzysztof Komeda's "Sleep Safe and Warm" (from the film score for *Rosemary's Baby*), it is fascinating to hear more familiar songs reimagined on this trio's terms of atypical lyricism.

—Thomas Conrad