

HENRY BRUN & THE LATIN PLAYERZ

RHYTHMS AND REEDS...
A TRIBUTE TO THE MASTER DUKE ELLINGTON



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RHYTHMS AND REEDS... A TRIBUTE TO THE MASTER DUKE ELLINGTON

Featuring Justo Almario, Spot Barnett, John Mills, Philippe Vieux, Gabe Pintor and Judi Deleón



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RHYTHMS AND REEDS... A TRIBUTE TO THE MASTER DUKE ELLINGTON

There's not much I can say that hasn't been said about the Duke. His legacy transcends music and culture across the Americas and globally. He defined Americana. His musical voicings challenged all standards and opened doors for the creativity that exists in Jazz today.

Ellington's legacy inspired me to record this humble but specific tribute to his music. The tunes recorded were chosen for their meaning and the facility to give them a new perspective, a new breath of fresh air, to challenge the minds of those that grew up with his music, those who understand the power of this gentleman's body of work.

How can you pay tribute to a man whose body of work guided you through your ABC's in Jazz? The only way was finding a unique expression, leading me to choose a basic Latin rhythm section and featuring his melodies interpreted through a specific instrument – a saxophone. That thought evolved into its title: Rhythms and Reeds – A Tribute to the Master Duke Ellington.

Having the honor of knowing a living legend as Justo Almario isn't something I take lightly. From Mongo Santamaria to Alicia Keys, Charles Mingus, Freddie Hubbard, Machito, Chaka Kahn, Queen Latifah, Jennifer Lopez and many others, his mark is heard across the globe today. His interpretations of 'U.M.M.G.' (Upper Manhattan Medical Group) and 'Cotton Tail' are exceptional. Experimenting with Puerto Rican folkloric rhythms is always an open invitation to have fun.

Then we add the participation of other great musicians. Vernon 'Spot' Barnett is a living legend of the Texas Tenor tradition. He led the Revue behind Ike and Tina Turner, shared stage with James Brown and Ray Charles, and worked with Bobby 'Blue' Bland. His soulful rendition of the classic 'In a Sentimental Mood' is the emotional highpoint of this recording.

Featuring some of Texas' best reed players presents a huge challenge in itself. I called my friend, Dr. John Mills to help flavor some of our treatments of Duke's music. Recording and/or performing with David Byrne, the Maria Schneider Orchestra, Dr. John and Bonnie Raitt are just some of his credits. I can already imagine John's sultry rendition of 'Sophisticated Lady' making you stop on your tracks, playing it again and again.

On 'Lover Man', Mills is joined by Philippe Vieux, another sax veteran who's shared the stage with Horace Silver, Cedar Walton, Tito Puente, Eddie Palmieri and others. Then, multi-talented lead vocalist Judi Deleón, joined in to help create the magic.

Later, with the addition of San Antonio's own Gabriel Pintor, Mills and Vieux venture on a hard grooving "Plena" version of 'It Don't Mean a Thing (If It Ain't Got that Swing)'. You can truly experience the rhythms of Puerto Rico and New Orleans integrating with an injection of home grown Tex-Mex. This arrangement by pianist Travis Davis is just one of the many highlights of this production.

No Ellington production could be complete without the inclusion of some of the most requested favorites: bolero influenced 'Flamingo' and 'Solitude'; the contagious Cha Cha of 'Muñeca' (Satin Doll) and 'In a Mellow Tone'; the Guaracha moving strut of 'C Jam Blues'; the Cuban Charanga feel of 'Perdido'; and of course, a song I never get tired of recording, 'La Caravana Reprise' (Caravan).

For these, our "wrecking crew" of Travis Davis (piano), Rafael Petitón (bass), Gabe Pintor (alto saxophone) and yours truly, take the responsibility for creating the vibe and Latinizing them to no extent.

Wrapping up our journey through "Dukelandia" is a tune I first heard while performing years ago with the great Mexican pianist Olivia Revueltas. Her rendition of 'Fleur-de-Africaine' (African Flower) inspired me to record our version using the same bassist of that particular evening - a person who has served as my guide over the years, a "padrino" (godfather) when it comes to Jazz education, a true San Antonio legend, bassist George Prado. Completed by pianist Benjamin Irom, we take off on a hypnotic trip into the depth of "Dukeness".

Whether its ten minutes or an hour, there's no boring moment when it comes to the beauty of Duke Ellington's music. Sit back, enjoy, and be part of our musical voyage.

Duke once said "You've got to find a way to say it without saying it." I followed his advice.

Henry Brun

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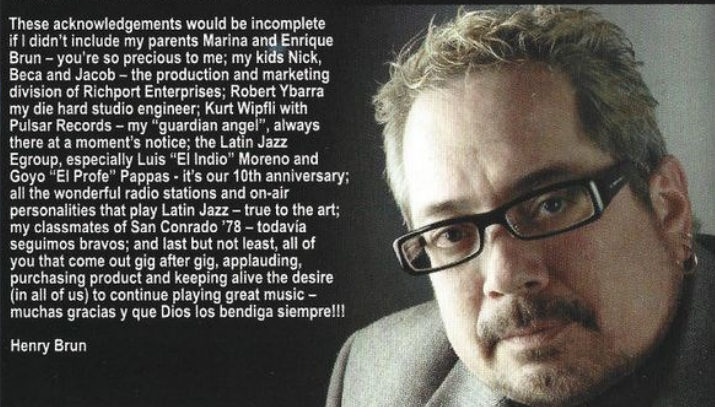
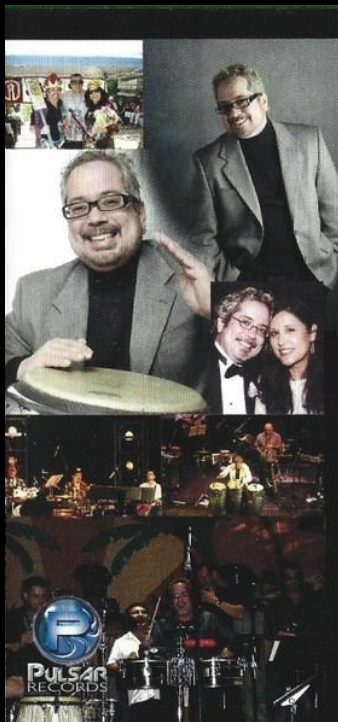
No production takes place without the support of key people, the ones that provide stability, encouragement and a lending hand so we can accomplish our dreams.

Super special thanks to my adorable wife, friend, and life partner Judi Daleón - without you none of this would be happening. You left your imprint with the last licks on 'Lover Man'.

I want to also thank the rest of my wrecking crew for having the patience to wait while Travis, Gabe and I completed this project: Adrian Ruiz (our musical director and 2nd trumpet), Ed Sherry (lead trumpet), Mike Koenning (drums), Billy Satterwhite (double bass) and René González (percussion). You guys are the nuts and bolts of this well oiled machine!

These acknowledgements would be incomplete if I didn't include my parents Marina and Enrique Brun - you're so precious to me; my kids Nick, Beca and Jacob - the production and marketing division of Richport Enterprises; Robert Ybarra my die hard studio engineer; Kurt Wipfli with Pulsar Records - my "guardian angel", always there at a moment's notice; the Latin Jazz Egroup, especially Luis "El Indio" Moreno and Goyo "El Profe" Pappas - it's our 10th anniversary; all the wonderful radio stations and on-air personalities that play Latin Jazz - true to the art; my classmates of San Conrado '78 - todavía seguimos bravos; and last but not least, all of you that come out gig after gig, applauding, purchasing product and keeping alive the desire (in all of us) to continue playing great music - muchas gracias y que Dios los bendiga siempre!!!

Henry Brun



THE PLAYERZ "DUKE" ENSEMBLE 2009:

Henry Brun – tumbadoras, quinto, bongo, cowbell, timbales, cúa, maracas, guiro, shakers, clave

Travis Davis – piano, keyboards

Rafael "Ralph" Pettón – electric bass

Gabriel "Gabe" Pintor – alto and tenor saxophone

Judi Deleón - vocals

INVITED GUESTS

Justo Almariz:

Alto, Tenor Saxophone and Flute (tracks 1 and 12)

Vernon "Spot" Barnett:

Tenor Saxophone (track 4)

Dr. John Mills:

Tenor Saxophone and Flute (tracks 5, 8 and 11)

Phillippe Vieux:

Baritone Saxophone (tracks 5 and 11)

Dr. Benjamin Irom: Piano (tracks 4 and 13)

Pedro "Pete" Ojeda:

Electric Bass (track 4)

George Prado : Double Bass (track 13)



Henry Brun endorses Latin Percussion instruments, Pro Mark drumsticks, Stagcymbals, Mapex Drums and the Triplet drum glove. Judi Deleón endorses Toca percussion instruments.

Very special thanks to our "familia" at LP: Angelo Arimborgo, Memo Acevedo, Steve Nigohoslan, Terry Tlatelpa, Ray Enhoffer, Jim Rockwell, Tom Schwarz, and Victor Filonovich.

You guys are tops – your support is priceless!



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1. Upper Manhattan Medical Group (U.M.M.G.) 5:53
(Strayhorn) Arr. Justo Almarino / Henry Brun
2. Muñeca (Satin Doll) 4:00
(Ellington / Mercer / Strayhorn) Arr. Henry Brun
3. Flamingo 2:47
(Anderson / Grouya) Arr. Henry Brun
4. In a Sentimental Mood 6:00
(Ellington / Kurtz / Mills) Arr. Henry Brun
5. Lover Man 6:56
(Davis / Ramirez / Sherman) Arr. Travis Davis
6. Solitude 4:19
(DeLange / Ellington / Mills) Arr. Travis Davis
7. Perdido 3:00
(Drake / Lengua / Tizol) Arr. Travis Davis

8. Sophisticated Lady 4:00
(Ellington / Mills / Parish)
Arr. Travis Davis / Henry Brun

9. C Jam Blues 2:10
(Bigard / Ellington)
Arr. Travis Davis

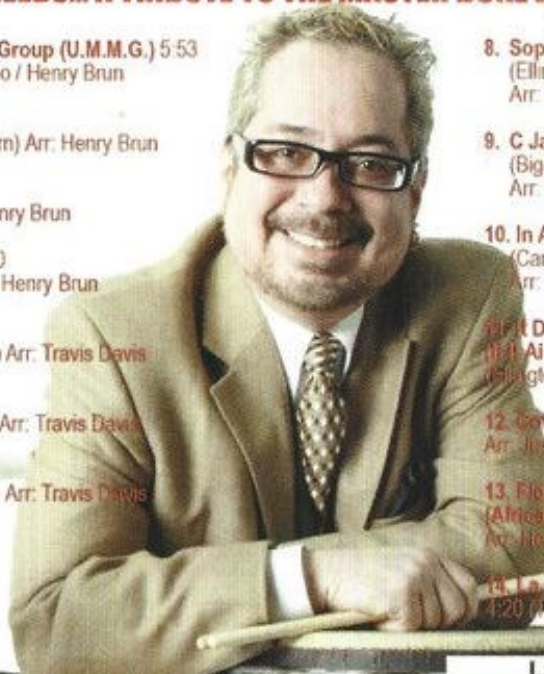
10. In A Mellow Tone 3:46
(Carol Stevens)
Arr. Travis Davis / Henry Brun

11. It Don't Mean A Thing
(It Ain't Got That Swing) 3:42
(Ellington / Mills) Arr. Travis Davis

12. Cotton Tail 4:14 (Ellington)
Arr. Justo Almarino / Henry Brun

13. Rhapsodie Africaine
(African Dancer) 7:09 (Ellington)
Arr. Henry Brun

14. La Caravana Nocturne (Caravan)
4:20 (Petit) Arr. Chico Petito



LATIN JAZZ



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