

Oscar Feldman

Oscar e Familia

SUNNYSIDE

★★★½

With five of the 10 songs on *Oscar e Familia* played as dedications, saxist Oscar Feldman might as well have listed the others as same. His crack band is rife with attitude and knows this music inside and out, playing a mix of all things Latin jazz with elements of funk, fusion and swing to spice things up.

Perhaps tipping his hand, Feldman kicks things off with a zesty spin in dedication to (one must assume) his wife with "Mrs. Tangoholic." "The Improvisors" following it up in a similar spirit (dedicated to Hermeto Pascoal). These are songs that blend Latin jazz with horn charts and the light grease of electric piano (the tango plays an inverted role on the opener, the 7/4 beat on the latter keeping things a tad off-kilter). Playing alto, Feldman leads the charge with featured players Manuel Valera (on piano and Fender Rhodes throughout), bassist John Benítez and drummer Antonio Sanchez the basic fulcrum. His jazz



chops are truly on display with another of his dedications, this one to fellow altoist Lee Konitz with "So Tenderlee," played at a medium-tempo swing pace. Sharing solo turns with tenorist Mark Turner, Feldman shows that he knows and loves to swing.

Along the way, Feldman adds percussion and a string quartet, perhaps the most poignant dedication being the one he writes for his father, "Coco Da Bahia," which starts out slow and full of feeling only to lead into a spirited

Latin samba, Feldman's horn likewise full of feeling, strangely reminiscent of Lee Konitz. Feldman's use of the strings has them sounding both subdued and orchestral, the recording giving them almost equal billing sonic-wise. Valera's turn on piano both slightly funky and eloquent. This is pretty music with an edge.

While most of the program is written by Feldman, three are written by others, namely Astor Piazzolla's "Triunfal," Wayne Shorter's "Children Of The Night" and Guillermo Klein's "El Minotauro" (Feldman co-composed the gentle closer "Peace To Find" with Klein). If you want to hear original takes on these three significant composer/players, check out Feldman's passionate approaches to their music. "Triunfal" is clothed in a jazzy tango wardrobe, while "Children Of The Night" and "El Minotauro" are full of personality as well as Latin spunk. —John Ephland

Oscar e Familia: Mrs. Tangoholic; The Improvisers; So Tenderlee; Oscar e Familia; Coco Da Bahia; New Tango; Triunfal; El Minotauro; Children Of The Night; Peace To Find. (64:06)

Personnel: Oscar Feldman, alto and soprano saxophones; Diego Urcola, trumpet (1), trombone (2); Manuel Valera, piano, Fender Rhodes; John Benítez, bass; Antonio Sanchez, drums; Pernell Saturnino, congas, cajón; Mark Turner, tenor saxophone (3); Xavier Pérez, tenor and baritone saxophone (4); Pablo Aslan, bass (4, 7, 8); Cuarteto String Quartet (5, 6); Octavio Brunetti, piano (7); Tito Castro, bandoneon (7); Luis Alberto Spinetta, vocal (10).

Ordering info: oscarfeldman.com.ar

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