



Oscar Feldman -“Oscar eFamilia”

November 11, 2009 – Sunnyside Records is home to some of Argentina's most cutting-edge jazz musicians; Guillermo Klein, Adrian Iaies, Fernando Huergo and Carlos Franzetti represent the zenith of that country's contributions to the jazz continuum, Now, you can add the brilliant saxophonist **Oscar Feldman** to that illustrious list with his Sunnyside debut, **Oscar e Familia**: a splendid, ten-track recording featuring an impressive Pan-American cast consisting of Puerto Rican bassist **John Benitez**, Cuban pianist **Manuel Valera**, Curacao percussion master **Pernell Saturnino**, American tenor sax titan **Mark Turner**, Mexican drummer **Antonio Sanchez**, and Feldman's homeboy and lablemate, trumpeter **Diego Urcola**.

“The sound of Oscar and all the musicians who played on this CD is beautiful.”

- Hermeto Pascoal

Oscar e Familia is a heartfelt and truly masterful composition. Whether you are a Jazz Fan, Latin Music Fan, or just have ears, **Oscar e Familia** is an experience. The album is smart, listenable and virtuosic without being self indulgent. Feldman showcases the amazing musicianship of some of South America's great Jazz Artists. “Mrs. Tangoholic” is a powerful and airy tune. “The Improvisers” allow Feldman and Urcola to explore some very interesting textures over the vamp feel of the tune. Feldman composed and dedicated “So Tenderlee” to his friend and mentor Lee Konitz. The title track “Oscar e Familia” is harmonically charged with captivating melodies. “Coco de Bahia”, “...recalls the hot breeze blowing off the Brazilian Seashore”, according to Feldman. If this song is Brazil, give me a ticket and a pair of shorts. “New Tango” while possessing a terrible name is a beautiful and romantic tango. “Triunfal” is an amazingly complex piece by Astor Piazzolla. The incredibly sensual and enigmatic “El Minotauro” precedes the dark and brooding monster of a song by Wayne Shorter, “Children of the Night”. “Peace to Find” closes the disk as a tour de force of a musical journey. Oscar Feldman brilliantly captured what music is to him in this, his second album as a solo artist and the first in ten years.

Mrs. Tangoholic opens the disk with a powerful and airy tune that highlights the skilled bassist, John Benitez, and drummer, Antonio Sanchez. Light and tasteful guitar work round out and compliment Cuban pianist Manuel Valera. The unmistakable Cuban feel of this tune is no doubt a result of the influence of Valera and Pernell Saturnino on congas. The bridge has a feel of the old Barbet/Moore tune Skyliner. Lush transitions and driving unison lines tumble and roll into and out of solos by Mr. Feldman and Argentine trumpeter/trombonist Diego Urcola.

The Improvisers is another driving Latin rhythm tune. Feldman and Urcola sail through their lines with some fantastic bass work by Benitez to support their creative improvisations and fill in

the gaps. Modal transitions move the tune and allow Feldman and Urcola to explore some very interesting textures over the vamp feel of the tune.

So Tenderlee is a wonderful swing tune. Feldman composed and dedicated this tune to saxophonist Lee Konitz who inspired the lush and cool sound and approach to melodic and rhythmic improvising during the late '40s, '50s and early '60s. The wonderful writing and arranging of this tune are brilliantly delivered by Feldman and fellow saxophonist Mark Turner.

The title track, ***Oscar e Familia***, opens with beautiful, flowing soprano sax by Feldman, bowed Acoustic Bass by Argentinean Bassist Pablo Aslan and Rhodes by Valera. Brazilian born Hermeto Pascoal also known as *o bruxo* (the sorcerer) composed and dedicated this song to Feldman. "Hermeto Pascoal ...distills his great originality, the colors of Brazil and the Jungle", according to Feldman. Familia's complex rhythms and harmonically charged captivating melodies intensify and climax in an explosive finale.

Coco de Bahia was composed for Feldman's father, former Director of Culture in Cordoba and film director. It's minor and melancholic opening and sub tones are a contrast from its light and happy melody played by Feldman on Alto. From the positive romantic melody, to the rhythmic beauty of the Brazilian feel, to the warm embrace of the strings, Coco da Bahia, "...recalls the hot breeze blowing off the Brazilian Seashore", according to Feldman. If this song is Brazil, give me a ticket and a pair of shorts.

New Tango opens with Pablo Aslan on acoustic bass and drummer Antonio Sanchez in a marvelously delicate intro. The tune opens and grows into a lush and beautiful alto feature. Delicate piano work of Manuel Valera set amidst a backdrop of billowing strings from The Cuartetango Stings Quartet and Feldman's rich sound invokes an almost Pavlovian emotional response. New Tango while possessing a terrible name is beautiful and romantic.

Triunfal is an amazingly complex piece by Astor Piazzolla featuring Feldman's rich Alto sound and Tito Castro on Bandoneón (little accordion). This German instrument brought to Argentina by sailors and immigrants became an important part of local music. Pianist Octavio Brunetti, Castro and Aslan, being native Argentinean and true tango musicians, create an authentic modern tango in Triunfal.

El Minotauro opened by bass virtuoso Pablo Aslan turns into a sexy driving Chacarera rhythm. The intensely syncopated beat gilded by Saturnino's conga work and the colorful melodies played by Feldman are both incredibly sensual and enigmatic.

Children of the Night is a dark and brooding monster of a song. The Latin rhythm creates an intensity and power that is both unnerving and sensual. Wayne Shorter's composition is brought to life by Feldman's group of virtuosos. Valera's intensely percussive and masterful piano, Benitez's incredibly creative bass work and Saturnino's percussion are brought to a torrid of intense rhythmic and melodic passion.

Peace to Find is in essence a walk or a discussion of music per say. One feels as though a relationship exists between Feldman's soprano and Luis Alberto Spinetta. The beautiful lyrical exchange and soaring soprano float as in an ethereal plane. Music is about communicating thought, emotion and feeling simultaneously. Peace of Find does this masterfully. - Jason A. Strain