

Keep Swinging



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A weekly web log in Dutch and English to share my passion for jazz, jazz-related music, record collecting and other music projects that surprise me. | Een wekelijkse weblog in het Engels en het Nederlands waarin ik mijn passie voor jazz, jazz-gerwante muziek, platenverzamelen en verrassende projecten met anderen wil delen.

Monday, May 10, 2010

Luciano Zuccheri & Quintetto Ritmico di Milano

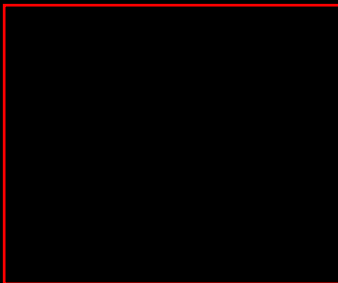


2010 is the Centennial of *Django Reinhardt* (1910-1953), the world famous Gypsy guitar player who has inspired generations of guitarists to follow his path into the world of jazz. Django's musical heritage still is a treasure for guitarists and other musicians all over the world. Today the term "Gypsy Jazz" is tightly connected with the name of Django and his musical heritage, preserved and enlarged by devoted followers of this specific concept of jazz. In this entry we will put focus on one of the ensembles among Django's contemporaries, the [Quintetto Ritmico di Milano](#), that followed in his footsteps, but with a special approach that differentiate the recordings of the group from the average gypsy jazz inspired ensembles thanks to the ideas and efforts of the leader, [Luciano Zuccheri](#).



In 2002 the Italian *Riviera Jazz Records* released the above shown cd featuring 26 historically interesting recordings by Luciano Zuccheri and the Quintetto Ritmico di Milano in the series of "Jazz In Italy". The recordings on the disc are made between 1942 and 1951 and the music contained leaves the listener with an impression of a remarkable string swing ensemble that was modeled after the popular QHCF featuring Django Reinhardt and Stephane Grappelli, but with a different repertoire and approach. The repertoire of the disc does not contain popular music connected with the American swing tradition, only two standards, "The Old Folks at Home" and

"I Wonder Where My Baby Is Tonight" from the American book are featured, the remaining tunes are of Italian origin, many of them composed by Luciano Zuccheri or members of his ensemble. The reason for this of course has to do with the political situation in Italy of the time where a ban was put on American jazz and related music by the government - like in Germany and other occupied countries by the Nazis or Fascists. However, the choice of repertoire also depends on the taste and concept of swing according to the leader, Luciano Zuccheri. As stated in the liner notes, "*Zuccheri's main interest is clearly more unique romantic Italian compositions, often written by Zuccheri and his musicians, rather than American jazz standards.*" Zuccheri and his bandmembers were clearly inspired by QHCF, but the Quintetto Ritmico di Milano was different from Django's group. *Fabio Lossani*, a guitarist and scholar of Gypsy Jazz, has some interesting considerations in the liner notes with the cd worth quoting here. "*The rhythm section has not the characteristic and bursting "pompe"; this probably due to the fact that the Italian musicians, although just as talented, were not manouche gypsies. Nevertheless the choice of a lighter rhythm section was not forced but dictated by Zuccheri's taste. He came from a background of classical studies, which was not fiery gypsy music.*" Further, about the guitar style of Zuccheri compared to Django's, *Mr. Lossani notes: "His guitar style, equally devoted to virtuosity, is less aggressive and passionate, but more reasoned and has a different way of "carrying" the phrase despite some techniques (octaves, sweep chords and runs) that could render him similar to Django. It would be more accurate to say that his style tended to be more similar to that of Stephane Grappelli. A theory supported by the fact that Zuccheri, who also played the violin, loved to transcribe and study the great violinist's solos. (?) The sound, although it came from a guitar with steel strings (...) was certainly not that of Django's Selmer-Maccaferri ..."* - To give you an impression of the music played by Zuccheri and the Quintetto Ritmico di Milano here's an example of one of the recordings also available on the shown disc, "Improvviso", recorded November 21st, 1942.



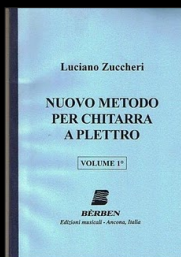
[Luciano Zuccheri](#) (1911-1981) founded the *Quintetto Ritmico di Milano* in 1941. Before that he had been a member of the famous *Pieraldo Orchestra* since 1933, but in 1938 he left to join a group directed by accordionist *Gorni Kramer*, where he had the opportunity to place himself in the spotlight. In 1938, his stay with Kramer earned him an exclusive contract with the 'La Voce del Padrone' record label for which he began to make semi-commercial records that made him popular with the public. However, it was not until 1941 when he founded his own group, the Quintetto Ritmico di Milano, that he entered the world of Italian jazz and recorded regularly with this group between 1942 and 1951. Some of the recordings featured on the disc have vocal refrain by popular Italian crooners and songbirds of the time, and there is a change in personnel of the group occasionally, especially among featured violinist. A rare picture of the Quintetto Ritmico di Milano is published in the cd-booklet and copied here



Compared with other string swing ensembles of the time besides the QHCF the Quintetto Ritmico di Milano could lead to considerations of similarities and differences i.e. pointing out Scandinavian examples of the genre, like *Svenska Hotkvintetten* in Sweden featuring the magnificent lead guitarist, *Sven Stiberg*. Or think of Norwegian stellar guitarist *Robert Normann* with the various ensembles he joined forces, and why not also mention Argentine *Oscar Alemán*, who like Zuccheri had his own ideas of the string swing formula? However, we'll leave such considerations to the listener of the cd and insert another example of a recording by Quintetto Ritmico di Milano also at the cd above, "Vagone Letto" from November 21st, 1942



The Quintetto Ritmico di Milano lasted seven years as a performing ensemble (1941-48), records were made and released between 1942 and 1951, a compilation of the output is featured on the disc above still available from [Riviera Jazz Records](#). Tracklist available by clicking cd cover above.



Luciano Zuccheri continued his career as a guitarist in light entertainment and popular music in the following period, but he also wrote compositions for classical guitar, released method books on plectrum guitar playing and recorded occasionally, but not in the field of jazz according to info available.

Jo

Retrospect

Oscar Aleman Choro

Music Flexible Records Hit

of the Week-Durium Keep Swinging News Letter Keep Swinging Contributions

posted by Jo at 12:51 PM

1 Comments:

Ioannis said...

I like this record - It's like a sirtaki

Ioannis (from Corfu - Greeche)

8:25 AM

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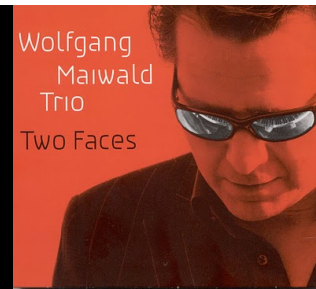


Sanna van Vliet Trio
(+ Joe Cohn-Sjoerd Dijkhuizen)
Dance On The Moon

Hans Koert



De Jazz Parade
Rob van Scheers
Hans Koert



Wolfgang Maiwald Trio
Two Faces
Hans Koert



Django with his American Friends
1935-1945 Jorgen Larsen



Mariano di Nunzio Trio Barracina
Sonata a 3 + 2
Hans Koert



Fats Waller on the Air
1938 Broadcasts
Hans Koert



Busch-van Kemenade
Contemplation
Hans Koert

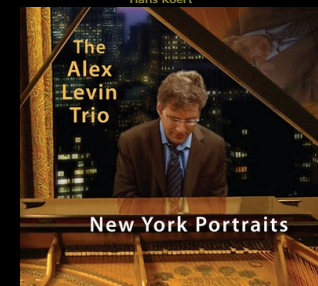


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North Sea Jazz Festival 2010
Bob Brookmeyer
Ornette Coleman
Bobby Hutcherson-Cedar Walton
Hans Koert



V-Discs found
on Christmas Island
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New York Portraits

Alex Levin Trio
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Avishai Cohen - Aurora
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