

El Cumbanchero

by [Rainlore's World of Music](#)

Jazz flautist Mark Weinstein's latest album, *El Cumbanchero*, arranged by Aruán Ortiz, will be released on the Jazzheads label on 8th November. Following Weinstein's (approximate) pattern of alternating Brazilian and Cuban albums, this sees him return to his beloved Cuban music.

However, *El Cumbanchero* ventures into new territory for Weinstein, the charanga. With a twist. While the charanga is a flute-led form, with the traditional wooden flute normally played mostly in the top register, Weinstein mostly adheres to his preferred middle and lower registers, and plays his normal golden Powell flute as well as alto and bass flute. And, needless to say, the form is given a strictly jazz treatment. The project was facilitated by the superb arrangements of pianist Aruán Ortiz, without whom, Mark Weinstein acknowledges, this album would never have come about.

The basic quartet comprises Weinstein himself, with Ortiz on piano, bassist Yuniór Terry, and long-time collaborator Mauricio Herrera on timbales, conga, and guiro. They are supplemented on some tracks by the conga of Yusnier Sánchez Bustamante, and on all tracks by at least part of or a whole string quartet as is usual in charanga. Ortiz proves himself one of the very finest Latin jazz pianists to emerge in a long time. Herrera is also breathtaking, as usual. The rest of the team prove themselves first class. And Weinstein himself is on absolute top form and simply takes one's breath away – I don't think I have heard him play better than this.

For the material on *El Cumbanchero* Weinstein and Ortiz found that both shared the same favourites, and they selected six classics and three originals by Ortiz. Doubtless, the title track will be best known to most, having been recorded more than perhaps any other Latin piece. But here it is given an entirely new life that is exciting and utterly delightful. The remainder of the classics encompass some of my own favourites as well, I must confess. The three originals contributed by Ortiz are outstanding and, though taking a mostly squarely Latin jazz approach from the outset (*Aruancó* and *Av. Pintor Tapiro*), complement the classics perfectly.

Weinstein (and Ortiz) takes a big risk in taking the charanga out of its normal dance context while maintaining (more or less) the original instrumentation. But the risk has paid off, and *El Cumbanchero* ultimately marks a new milestone in the evolution of the Latin / Afro-Cuban jazz 'genre' through taking the traditional charanga form, combined with jazz, squarely into the 21st century. With the collaboration of Aruán Ortiz, Mark Weinstein, more than forty years after his revolutionary *Cuban Roots* album, continues to be the pioneer of Afro-Cuban jazz.

Ortiz's brilliant string arrangements expand the melodic and harmonic space for Weinstein, which throughout he explores with his customary expertise and consummate artistry, while exploring the rhythmic complexities of every piece to the fullest as well. In the process, Weinstein and Ortiz deliver a series of often fierce improvs that just take the breath away.

With *El Cumbanchero*, Weinstein has created a whole new, lasting legacy for the jazz flute, and once again confirmed himself as one of the great improvisers writ large. He continues to evolve, along with his music and his distinctive flute voice – with particularly imaginative use of the alto and bass – surpassing himself with each new album. Without a doubt, *El Cumbanchero* is far and away Mark Weinstein's best album yet.

To speak of consistency would be an insult to Weinstein and this brilliant album. Pick any track, and it's an instant favourite. *El Cumbanchero* is wholly addictive and hypnotic in its beauty, elegance and charm, never mind its genius. You'll want to play this album over and over again.

Furthermore, to speak of Mark Weinstein's *El Cumbanchero* as an absolute must have would be a complete understatement. Fortunately, Jazzhead's excellent international distribution ensures that it is easily available anywhere. So, what are you waiting for? Get it!

Album Of The Week: *El Cumbanchero*, Mark Weinstein

by Chip Boaz

[The Latin Jazz Corner](#)

Cuba's musical history is vast and it holds a wide number of styles and approaches, but in many cases, Latin Jazz continues to investigate only a small slice of that musical horizon. In the early days of the style, Latin Jazz was built upon dance traditions, a natural fit which served the development of the style well. The use of Cuban dance styles didn't act as a starting point though; it became the path that outlined the careers of most Latin Jazz musicians. The reasoning behind the use of these rhythms is logical – the dance element connects with a wide audience and for many jazz musicians, it delivers a different yet accessible foundation for improvisation. The overlooked creative possibilities in the greater world of Cuban music is staggering though – from Santeria songs to rumba rhythms, there's many opportunities for improvisation. Some Latin Jazz artists have dug deeper into these waters, but those projects are far too rare – when they arise, they should be cherished. Flautist Mark Weinstein teams with pianist and arranger Aruán Ortiz on one of these projects, *El Cumbanchero*, a deep exploration of the combination between jazz and charanga music.

Charanga Classics With An Improvisatory Edge

Weinstein merges the charanga tradition with jazz ideals by performing through classics arranged with a improvisatory edge by Ortiz. A long and winding string melody flies into the rhythm section's explosive groove on Rafael Hernandez's "El Cumbanchero," charging towards the main theme. Weinstein assertively places the well known melody over the thick string texture, pushed into the forefront by an engaging rhythmic accompaniment. The strings frame the flautist's improvisation with strong and abrupt attacks, while the Weinstein leads the rhythm section through a whirlwind of spontaneous creation. Ortiz introduces a piece of the melody which the string take in several different harmonic directions, until Weinstein enters with the unforgettable melody to Alejandro Gonzales' "La Mulata Rumbera." The clever arrangement sends the ensemble through several colorful variations

before an energetic montuno from Ortiz sends Weinstein into a solo full of running lines and melodic exploration. A unison band attack opens into a vamp for percussion solo, where an overdubbed Mauricio Herrera trades beautifully syncopated ideas between congas and timbales. The rhythm section places rhythm attacks around short string melodies on Enrique Jorrín's "Doña Olga" before Weinstein moves into the main melody. The ensemble captures the dignified grace of classic danzones with an arrangement that finds the melody traveling between Weinstein, Ortiz, and the string section with a delicate beauty. A montuno from Ortiz introduces the montuno section, where Weinstein skillfully integrates his own voice into the classic Cuban setting. An ascending melody made up of abrupt staccato notes falls into an elegant melody that plays upon the rhythmic character and lush texture of the danzon with sensitive performances from Weinstein and the string section Israel "Cachao" Lopez's "Armoniosos de Amalia." Bassist Yuniór Terry sets up the mambo section with a great tumbao that inspires a furious flight of improvised notes from Weinstein. Ortiz follows with an insightful statement that plays heavily upon típico phrasing that hints at his prodigious jazz vocabulary while staying firmly set in tradition. Weinstein steadily walks between worlds on these tracks, exploring the possibilities of the charanga around the idea of jazz improvisation.

Emphasizing The Strings

Weinstein applies his gorgeous tone to some beautiful Ortiz arrangements that forego the rhythm section in favor of rich string textures. The string ensemble flirts with subtle dissonances as they engage in a tender call and response with Weinstein's bass flute on Sindo Garay's "Perla Marina." The dramatic rhythmic pauses and textural shifts allow for complex intertwining of melodic phrases and subtle harmonic coloring. Weinstein's bass flute adds a fascinating element to the string sound, allowing for understatement and fine dynamic shading. The deep tone of Terry's bass underlies an engaging introduction with shades of mystery and light on Cesar Portillo de la Luz's "Contigo en la Distancia." Ortiz's piano outlines structure behind Weinstein's interpretation of the melody while the strings add contrary lines and rhythmic motion. There's a beautiful simplicity to Weinstein's performance here that is both appropriate and touching, blending perfectly with the intricate string parts. These pieces add a distinctly different element to the album that simultaneously calls upon the classical element inherent in the charanga, emphasizes the string section, and displays Ortiz's wonderful writing.

Original Compositions From Ortiz

Ortiz contributes a collection of original compositions to the piece, allowing the group to step outside the tradition slightly, while staying within the theme of the album. A flute melody leads the group through an introduction filled with chromaticism before moving into a more traditional melody on "Danzon de Liz." The rhythm section keeps the momentum behind Weinstein's solo, which travels through a variety of melodic ideas between sparse interjections from the strings. A quick interlude brings the groups to a whisper behind a tasteful solo from Ortiz that gently pushes the limits of the danzon with edgy harmonic twists. A subtly burning rumba blazes behind a flowing melody and a syncopated bass line on "Aruancó," a piece without strings that leans more on the group's jazz side. Ortiz utilizes the spacious texture and rhythmic syncopation inherent in the piece to build a wonderful solo dripping with creative tension. Weinstein flies into an enthusiastic solo turn, winding through the colorful support provided by Ortiz before moving aside for a ferocious conga solo.

from Herrera. A beautifully executed exchange between Weinstein and cellist Aristides Rivas brings “Av. Pintor Tapiro” to life against the sensitively supportive backdrop of the rhythm section. Weinstein explores the improvisatory possibilities over a danzon rhythm, and once the jumps into the mambo section, Terry moves into the forefront with a strong melodic bass solo. A return to the melody serves as a transition point into an energetic statement from Ortiz before the group sets up a vamp for a powerful timbale solo from Herrera. These original pieces from Ortiz emphasize the jazz edge of the equation, exposing another set of possibilities when combining jazz with danzon.

A Deep Improvisatory Exploration Of Charanga

Weinstein and Ortiz demonstrate the potential behind a blend of charanga music and jazz on *El Cumbanchero*, showing us the benefits of a deeper improvisatory exploration of Cuban styles. This is not the first time that Weinstein has gone deep into the Cuban music tradition through a jazz perspective; he’s made a career from digging deeper into the world of Cuban music. That experience is readily apparent in his performance, as he plays through melodies and improvisations with comfort and a curious spark. Ortiz shines on multiple levels throughout the recordings, showing his skills both as a performer and an arranger. His string arrangements form the heart and soul of the recording; they brilliantly connect with charanga tradition while consistently delivering uniquely creative spins on the style. His playing is smart and informed, showing a broad understanding of Cuban performance approaches with an unwavering sense of personality. Terry and Herrera supply outstanding support throughout the recording, playing with an assertive feel that never overwhelms the group. The string ensemble plays beautifully, navigating Ortiz’s complex arrangement while keeping a solid groove. Weinstein and Ortiz explore jazz through a facet of Cuban music that deserves more attention on *El Cumbanchero* and the results are both stunning and inspiring, proving that digging deeper into this rich cultural tradition is a practice that delivers beautiful music.

by **Dan Bilawsky**
[All About Jazz](#)

Exploring music with the intellect of an ethnomusicologist, the imagination of an artist, and the technical savvy and musical know-how to combine the two is no easy feat, but Mark Weinstein is more than capable of pulling it off. For the flautist’s latest Latin feast, he turned his attention toward a fusion of jazz and charanga music, a form of Cuban music that features the flute as the lead voice in an ensemble that also contains a string section, percussion, piano and bass, and the results are sophisticated and scintillating.

Fellow flautist Danilo Lozano’s enlightening liner notes make mention of the fact that pianist Gonzalo Rubalcaba worked with a similar concept on *Mi Gran Pasión* (Messidor, 1987), but Lozano also makes sure to highlight the fact that Weinstein’s work stands apart from the pianist’s string-less album because it uses the *actual* instrumentation associated with charanga. This unique combination of voices can create a raucous party (“El Cumbanchero”), a refined, yet passionate, dance hall dalliance (“Dona Olga”), or a lighthearted affair (“Armoniosos De Amalia”), but each of these numbers share certain space and characteristics with the others, like circles in a Latin Jazz-themed Venn diagram.

The only songs that truly stand apart are the two alto flute-and-string-only numbers—a somber and classical-leaning “Perla Marina” and a film score-worthy “Contigo En La Distancia.”

While the album’s nine tracks pay tribute to Cuban and Puerto Rican composers of note and highlight Weinstein’s flute mastery, they also showcase the arranging talents and compositional skills of the leader’s chief collaborator on this project, pianist Aruán Ortiz. Ortiz manages to tackle the traditions of charanga without resorting to cliché and his own compositions add another element to the music. His “Av. Pinto Tapiro” and “Danzón De Liz” are breezy and bright, but “Aruanco” proves to be the standout original. The pianist juxtaposes relentless, clattering hand drums against Weinstein’s flute, and uses his own piano to create hypnotic, cycling chords and some engrossing solo work.

Weinstein’s continued willingness to reach beyond the status quo and explore the neglected tributaries of the wider Latin Jazz river marks him as a true giant of this music, and *El Cumbanchero* is merely the latest document to prove it.

by Jennifer Odell
Downbeat Magazine

Flutist and former trombonist Mark Weinstein’s 1967 game-changer *Cuban Roots* marked a turning point in Latin jazz in the way it used Cuban folk rhythms. Four-and-a-half decades later, Weinstein sets his sights on 1940s-era Cuban charanga. Here, he sculpts the traditional form to accommodate his own interests and strengths as a player and serious student of Cuban music’s history.

Weinstein eschews the wooden, five- or six-holed flute that supports the high-register notes traditionally associated with charanga. Instead, he sticks with his usual assortment of instruments with magical results. Case in point: Weinstein’s extended solo on the title track. Fast and dramatic, the conga number turns on a tension between the breakneck-speed percussion rhythms and the classically minded string section.

Weinstein’s post-bop-rooted solo burns away the chasm between the two, deftly balancing the agility of one with the theatricality of the other. The arrangements come courtesy of Aruan Ortiz, who was responsible for the difficult harmonies that make much of this album so compelling. Weinstein and his band also shine within slower tempos, such as on “Dona Olga,” which brims with romantic emotion and a swaying melody.

by Raul da Gama
Latin Jazz Network

It might seem foolhardy to many to take a chance and make an entire record based on “charanga”; perceived as rather old-fashioned too considering the rising eminence of the goldmine of what is now salsa—a common misnomer for all things Afro-Cuban. But not for flute maestro, Mark Weinstein, who, four years ago in a great leap of faith—literally-made, with Omar Sosa, *Tales From The Earth* a record that raised the spirit of the Holocaust and

indeed the spirit of all who perished in the hatred of racism (Ota, 2009). That was certainly a lot more risqué and unfashionable compared to this record; still, however, the fact is that Weinstein will not shy away from taking a chance on almost anything. Another fact about the flutist-borne out yet again on this record-is that he has the uncanny knack of finding the finest musical associates to collaborate with on projects. A case in point: the monstrously talented Cuban born pianist, Aruán Ortiz, who has not only played magnificently on this record, but who has also contributed the most exquisite and authentic “charanga” arrangements on this album.

The album literally explodes from the gates with an up-tempo version of “El Cumbanchero,” not only a title track, but a torch song for an era of music and dance that is all but forgotten about Cuba, a country that is bristles with an almost magical musical heritage. The record also pulsates with the undying heart of a classic “charanga” ensemble. There is the virtuoso artistry of flutist, Weinstein at the helm of affairs; but his art is also elevated by two magnificent string, bass and rhythm sections. The first is one consisting of violinists Francisco Salazar and Everhard Parades, cellist, Brian Sanders and on all but one of this ensemble’s tracks, the conguero, Yusnier Sánchez Bustamante. Not only does this ensemble bristle with energy and kinetics on “El Cumbanchero,” but it also shocks the body into involuntary dancing on “La Mulata Rumbera” and Sindo Garay’s classic “Perla Marina”.

The second ensemble comprises violinist Marc Szammer and Elena Rojas Crocker; plus virtuoso cellist Aristides Rivas. This group, together with Weinstein and Ortiz is responsible for the sublime work on the reverential “Doña Olga” as well as “Armoniosos de Amalia,” “Danzón de Liz” and the wistful “Contigo en la Distancia”. The two originals from the pen of Ortiz, “; Aruancó” and the frisky “Av. Pintor Tapiro” are played by just Weinstein, Ortiz and the majestic rhythm section including master percussionist Mauricio Herrera on conga, timbales and guiro and the remarkably melodic bassist, Yuniór Terry. Aristides Rivas joins the quartet on Ortiz’s “Av. Pintor Tapiro”.

Despite the seemingly traditional setup, Weinstein and Ortiz ring in the changes on almost every chart, breaking free of the formality and rigidity of the programmatic “charanga” charts. The harmonics for the charts flow in new and diaphanous; almost swooning waves of emotion. There is an almost visual element to the flexibility of the bodies of the dancers were these to be present during the recording. As it is the couples pirouetting sensuously in figures of eight are almost conjured up on this record of beauty and utter memorability. But although this aspect of artistry is nothing new for both Mark Weinstein and Aruán Ortiz, it must nevertheless be praised for its splendor.

Timbasa

By Woodrow Wilkins
AllAboutJazz.com

First came the transition from trombonist to flutist. Then came the transition to Latin jazz. For Mark Weinstein, a confluence of worlds has become *modus operandi*.

Brooklyn-born Weinstein's experience has included a fusion of post-bebop music with traditional Afro-Cuban drumming. As a trombonist, he worked with Chick Corea, Cal Tjader, Tito Puente, Maynard Ferguson, Herbie Mann, and many others. Since he began playing the flute, Weinstein has performed in a variety of settings, covering several styles including Afro-Caribbean, Brazilian, and North Indian.

The three-player percussion section introduces "Milestones," a high-energy piece that sets the stage for what follows. Weinstein is in league with the likes of Mann, Alexander Zonjic, and Tim Weisberg, putting the flute through some rapid-fire phrases. Axel Tosca Laugart is dazzling on piano. After the solo, he and Panagiotis Andreou answer the calls of Mauricio Herrera, Ogduardo Diaz, and Pedrito Martinez in an extended dialogue that showcases the percussionists' cohesion as a group. Each individual, however, absolutely knows how to make a mark.

Wayne Shorter's "Footprints" is that rare jewel that has been covered many times but doesn't become stale. The strong Latin flavor of this arrangement sets it apart from many others. Andreou's bass line is strong, and the piano solo is one of the song's many highlights. Andreou equals the piano on bass during his time to step into the center of attention, a position he returns to a few tracks further on.

He goes it alone to introduce "Caravan" and the free-form bass is accompanied by Andreou's chant. While continuing his strong play, the rest of the ensemble joins him. The bass bridges solos by Laugart and Weinstein. After the flute solo, piano and bass frame a mini concerto by the percussionists.

Weinstein doesn't make it easy to select one song that tops all the rest. Each track stands well on its own. But as a set, *Timbasa* is solid across the board.

By Brad Walseth
JazzChicago.net

Perhaps the hardest-working man in jazz today, flautist Mark Weinstein is back with yet another Latin jazz release - this time with award-winning Cuban percussionist Pedrito Martinez (with whom he worked on his *Algo Mas* and *Con Alma* albums. Busy having just released *Jazz Brasil* with Kenny Barron and with another shortly to be released (the Brazilian-flavored *Lua e So* - he has released 15 albums since 1996) Weinstein was somewhat reticent when approached by Martinez to record again, but was convinced when the percussion master said he could supply a group of truly exceptional (mostly) Cuban

musicians. The album was recorded in one day-long session and captures the excitement that is produced when great players are put together and set free. Classic tunes covered include "Milestones," "Footprints" (in 7/4 - a true highlight!), Herbie Hancock's "Watermelon Man," Chucho Valdes' "A Ernesto" and a rollicking "Caravan," while four originals (including a great album-ending version of Weinstein's "Just Another Guajir" - revisited from his 1960's classic Cuban Roots album). As always, Weinstein's flute is dancing and delightful - at times recalling the groundbreaking Herbie Mann, while pianist Axel Tosca Laugart is an absolute knockout (Weinstein says he is the best he has recorded with - high praise considering he has played with Barron and Chick Corea). Imaginative electric bassist Panagiotis Andreou (check his introduction to "Caravan" where he sings and plays along) , drummer Mauricio Herrera and bongo/bata player Ogduardo join Martinez to form what Weinstein says is the best rhythm section he has ever played with (yet another amazing claim from someone who has played with some of the best Afro-Cuban groups of the last fifty years). It is hard to argue with Weinstein as the rhythm section really shines. Despite the energetic and intricate drumming and juicy bass solos, the music here is often as relaxed as an island beach - and although it is toe-tapping, it doesn't raise your heart-rate to unacceptable levels like some of the most blistering and in-your-face Afro-Cuban music. The 69-year-old Weinstein is experiencing a resurgence of his career and continues to produce some of the finest recordings of Latin jazz around. No sign of slowing down either - he says he has two new tango albums in the work.

By Dan Bilawsky
AllAboutJazz.com

It's not uncommon to hear about an alto player moving to tenor, or vice versa, in an attempt to grow musically, develop a different sound or avoid getting stale. Likewise, plenty of people branch out within the woodwind or brass families, like a saxophonist learning to double on flute or a trumpet player doubling on valve trombone. Yes, these things do happen fairly often but you rarely hear about masterful jazz trombonists switching to flute. Mark Weinstein is the exception.

Weinstein, while playing trombone in the 1960s, worked with the cream of the crop, straddling the Latin and jazz communities. He worked with everybody from Chick Corea and Eddie Palmieri to Clark Terry and Charles Mingus. Though he retreated from the music scene in the early '70s, earned a Ph.D in Philosophy and became a college professor, music must have been on his mind at times. Eventually, he returned to the music scene and was reborn as a flautist. Weinstein began recording a string of strong and musically diverse albums in the late 1990s and he keeps moving forward.

Timbasa features Weinstein performing some killer Cuban jazz with an exceptional band. Axel Tosca Laugart lights up the music from behind the piano and Panagiotis Andreou has a firm presence on bass. The material chosen for this album, much like the music from Weinstein's *Con Alma* (Jazzheads, 2007), is a mixture of Latin-ized arrangements of jazz classics and new compositions. While that recording features flute, bass, piano, drums and percussion, *Timbasa* benefits from having two percussionists, with Pedrito Martinez and Oguardo Diaz - alongside drummer/percussionist Mauricio Herrera - creating some rumbling and tumbling patterns, and bringing some Latin fire into the mix.

While a few of the classics, like "Watermelon Man," already fit well within this genre, Weinstein takes some other tunes by the likes of Miles Davis and Wayne Shorter and reshapes them to fit his own vision. Weinstein and Laugart both get plenty of solo space on the album and Andreou bridges the gap between these two men and the percussion section. The bassist also gets some room to let loose and his explosive bass and vocals on the introduction to "Caravan" are a treat. Some of the most heart-pounding moments on the album take place when the pitched instruments provide simple vamps and the three-man percussion wrecking crew is left alone to create a storm beneath them. With the exception of the Middle-Eastern tinged mysticism of "Kavaklari Cubano," this music is high-energy party jazz and Weinstein always seems to find the right balance between the sound of a loose jam and that of a tight Latin unit.

by **Chip Boaz**

Collaboration lies at the heart of any musical endeavor, and often times, a project's success relies upon musicians working together coherently. This concept proves ultimately important in Latin Jazz ensembles, where trust and collective thought enable truly meaningful and interesting improvisation. For many groups, collaboration can be a learned skill; it becomes the art of give and take, where musicians learn when how to grab the spotlight and when to support their peers. Sometimes this lesson sinks into the ensemble quickly, and for some musicians, it takes years of shared musical experiences to refine their group process. Live performance often serves as the training ground for this process, giving musicians the chance to rise or fall through their team work. The recording studio tests the heart of a group's collaborative spirit, capturing their musical output and exposing the success or failure of the group's mutual work. When a group of musicians come together for the first time in the studio, they face an interesting challenge - since they don't have years of trust built into their relationships, their collaboration needs to be based strictly upon musicality. Success involves an open mind, a mature artistic attitude, and high level musical skills; a hole in any of these areas can curse the project. Flautist Mark Weinstein works with a group of young Cuban musicians on Timbasa, creating a highly collaborative environment that sparks some amazingly original and exciting interpretations of standards and new compositions.

Imaginative Arrangements Of Jazz Standards

Weinstein and his group turn several classic jazz standards inside out with imaginative arrangements and impressive performances. The drummers establish a very modern take on a son montuno as Weinstein and pianist Axel Tosca Laugart visit the classic melody on Miles Davis' "Milestones," accompanied by long round notes from bassist Panagiotis Andreou. Weinstein explodes into a flurry of quick runs over the assertive accompaniment from the rhythm section, delivering a fast and furious display of creativity. Laugart quickly contrasts Weinstein with a quietly intense entrance into his solo, using tense syncopations to drive the band into energetic solos from Ogduardo Diaz on bongó, Pedrito Martinez on congas, and Mauricio Herrera on drums. Andreou lazily implies the classic bass line to Wayne Shorter's "Footprints" before the rhythm section kicks into a seven beat cycle behind the melody with short leaps into cha cha cha on the turnaround. Weinstein floats over the odd meter groove with a relaxed fluency, spinning long lines full of rapid runs and sharp accents. Laugart moves around the seven beat cycle with a confident vigor, using the groove's natural tension

to his advantage, until Andreou makes a short statement, running low melodic lines through the texture. The rhythm section places their own mark upon Herbie Hancock's "Watermelon Man" with a laid back cha cha cha groove while Weinstein personalizes the familiar melody with liberal embellishments. Weinstein flies over the funky background with a bluesy edge, prodding the rhythm section with assertive lines, while Laugart uses broad open washes of understated lines to build his statement. Panagiotis combines rising sequences and virtuosic lines to construct an attention grabbing solo before the rhythm section provides an off-set series of attacks for an exciting improvisation from Martinez. These pieces find the group working together to produce highly original arrangements and awe inspiring performances that shed new light upon classic tunes.

Applying A Distinctive Performance Approach To Latin Jazz Pieces

The group adds their distinctive performance approach to repertoire closer to home, developing interpretations of pieces from the Latin Jazz world. Quick ascending lines explode into a broad pedal tone full of forward motion on Chucho Valdes' "A Ernesto" before the rhythm section establishes a short vamp for Weinstein's improvisation. The flautist charges into a frenzied combination of bebop licks and traditional Cuban phrases, inspiring enthusiastic response from Laugart and Herrera. A sharp break from the rhythm section allows Laugart to storm into his improvisation with a bluesy swagger evoking the spirit of the song's composer with virtuosic flights of jazz melodies that lead into an impressive series of solo from all three percussionists. Andreou melds amazing bass technique, impeccable musical construction, and sung accompaniment into an inspiring introduction for Duke Ellington and Juan Tizol's "Caravan." After Weinstein visits them melody with a free sense of phrasing, Laugart dramatically enters his improvisation, stretching musical lines into a long statement full of staggering rhythms and engaging melodies. Weinstein crafts an interesting solo that explores the edges of the song's harmony, moving into a stunning timbale solo from Martinez. A laid-back funky vamp from Laugart and Andreou give a boogaloo feel to Weinstein's "Just Another Guajira," while Weinstein plays the familiar melody over the band. Laugart jumps into a tasteful improvisation that captures the song's laid back feel, followed by Weinstein, who pushes the groove with quick lines and a bluesy edge. Andreou storms through a ferocious improvisation that combines percussive lines with chordal passages, and after Weinstein returns to the melody, Martinez opens into a polyrhythmic improvisation full of energy and class. These pieces once again offer a different perspective on familiar tunes, utilizing the collection power of the group to reinvent Latin Jazz classics.

Exploring Original Compositions From The Group

Weinstein appreciates the contributions from his group, taking the time to explore several of their original compositions. Jaw dropping percussion fills explode over a clave figure on Martinez's "Timbasa," leading into a rhythmic unison melody from Weinstein, Laugart, and Andreou. Weinstein stretches across a long improvisation, taking his time to build his ideas into a wild frenzy before Laugart glides over the keyboard with a distinct sense of rhythmic placement and thematic development. Andreou starts his statement with understated melodies, opening into impressive runs across his instrument until a spectacular percussive trade between Diaz, Martinez, and Herrera. Weinstein riffs around Andreou's Middle Eastern vocal scat on "Kavaklari Cubano," until batá drums provide a Cuban background to the cultural blend. Andreou sings along with his bass and Laugart on a slow and contemplative melody, as the group builds into a dramatic flourish for a contemplative improvisation from Weinstein. The group wraps around the vocal melody again, taking

dynamic turns to let Andreou and Weinstein extend their ideas and contribute thoughtful embellishments. Laugart introduces an engaging vamp over driving percussion while Andreou riffs on Martinez's "Encuentro," leading into a catchy melody from Weinstein. The rhythm section turns up the heat behind Weinstein's improvisation, driving the flautist to hit sharp rhythmic accents and fast runs. Both Laugart and Andreou thrive off the song's addictive groove, building attention grabbing solos, until aggressive percussion statements from Herrera, Martinez, and Diaz send the song into an exciting climax. These tracks allow Weinstein to share his ideas with the group and bring their compositional voices into the forefront of the album.

A Memorable Collaboration Between Master Musicians

Weinstein displays a supremely collaborative spirit on *Timbasa*, letting his musicians stretch their chops and enjoying the outcome. Despite the fact that this studio date represents an early effort from the group, Weinstein enables an environment where all the musicians work together fluently, showing both individuality and team effort. There's a distinctly modern approach from Weinstein's sidemen throughout the recording, mixing equal pieces of timba energy, Irakere influenced experimentation, and contemporary jazz harmony. While the band's roots differ from Weinstein's background, the flautist has spent his career exploring new and challenging repertoire. The band aggressively pushes Weinstein with their high energy approach and the flautist responds with some of his most engaging playing. As the musicians approach standards, they respect tradition, but they also rip each tune open and search for their own identities. Weinstein encourages the exploration and enters each familiar tune with a new perspective that delivers inspired playing. Laugart emerges as a potentially major voice in Latin Jazz piano, while Andreou presents a unique and impressive bass presence that demands attention. Martinez, Diaz, and Herrera supply a triple threat, providing an unstoppable percussion section with an interactive spirit and considerable improvisation abilities. Each song on *Timbasa* unfolds with inspiring and joyful performances that make this a memorable collaboration between master musicians.

by J Hunter
AllAboutJazz.com

Back in the day, people going to their first Grateful Dead show were given this advice: "If you get bored, just watch the drums." The spirit of that advice is applicable to flautist Mark Weinstein's latest CD. Not that *Timbasa* is boring, far from it-if anything, this should be counted as the first great jazz party disc of 2010. But as great as Weinstein is here, his percussion section's overall performance is off the charts.

On balance, "Milestones" is one of the more conservative pieces in trumpeter Miles Davis' catalog. But put Cuban percussion masters like drummer Mauricio Herrera, conguero/co-producer Pedrito Martinez and bongo master Ogdardo Diaz behind this disc-opener, and things get tribal in a big hurry. Weinstein's lines are absolutely thrilling as the piece builds momentum, and even though the group pulls back for Axel Tosca Laugart's piano solo, the piece's edge stays extremely sharp.

Weinstein may not have the accuracy of Dave Valentin or Herbie Mann, but he more than makes up for that with a relentless passion that runs through every piece on *Timbasa*. He

stuffs Wayne Shorter's "Footprints" into a 7/4 time signature and makes it work, albeit with a terrific assist from Laugart. Herbie Hancock's "Watermelon Man" doesn't have to be stuffed, because it lends itself perfectly to the disc's Cuban vibe, as does the Duke Ellington/Juan Tizol collaboration "Caravan" and Chucho Valdes' calypso-on-steroids rave-up "A Ernesto."

It's not all covers, though. Weinstein's "Just Another Guajira" offers sweethearts everywhere a chance to step onto the floor and let it all hang out. In addition to Martinez' stellar work on congas, he contributes a title track that lets Herrera truly go to town, and Weinstein positively wails on Martinez' second offering "Encuentro."

While it's good that jazz can be the most cerebral music around, it's also a good thing to turn the mind off and let the mojo run things for a while. Timbasa is a satisfying reminder that sunshine, sandy beaches and Mojitos are on the other side of the snowstorms of winter.

by Rainlore's World of Music

Red-hot off the presses and out on the street from 9th February is Mark Weinstein's hottest offering yet, Timbasa. So hot, it completely incinerated my stereo and set my ears, soul, mind, feet and heart on fire. The title derives from timba - party. And what a party!

Jazz flute and Afro-Cuban jazz giant Weinstein assembled some of the finest and brightest young Cuban talent in the US for this album. The percussion ensemble is the finest Afro-Cuban percussion ensemble yet, led again by Pedrito Martinez, first heard on Mark Weinstein's Algo Más (and on Con Alma) and whose star shines brighter than ever. An absolute sensation also is pianist Axel Tosca Laugart - unquestionably the finest Latin jazz pianist I have heard yet, bar none. Laugart is so hot it wouldn't surprise me if his ivories caught fire. Mark his name well, for I should be most surprised indeed if we didn't hear an awful lot more from and about this truly prodigiously gifted young pianist. Anchoring the rhythm section is outstanding bassist Panagiotis Andreou with an amazing ease and instinct of rhythm and time.

The exemplary virtuosity of all the players on Timbasa is perfectly matched by the absolute joyousness of their fiery performances. Mark Weinstein's flute and improvs attain yet greater heights than ever. All around, the soloing is out of this world. And Weinstein's unquestionable prowess as an arranger shines as ever, and as ever is tempered by a healthy respect for history.

The material on Timbasa is an unbeatable combination of some of the best-loved classics and blistering originals - one by Weinstein himself, another by Weinstein with Andreou, and two by Martinez. A perfect blend that will set any party on fire, and blow away any blues no matter how bad.

The opener, Miles Davis' classic Milestones, sets the pace and tone as well as the standard for the rest of Mark Weinstein's Timbasa. A more joyous and joyful version of this, perhaps Davis' best-remembered composition, would be hard to imagine. Weinstein's almost frenetic improvs are sheer magic, as indeed they are throughout the album. His sidemen likewise

prove they mean business straight from the off. The title track, *Timbasa*, a contribution by Pedrito Martinez, is also a joy, especially also its complex breaks or *cierres* that are sheer perfection and its closing percussion fireworks exchanges between Martinez, Herrera and Diaz. At 9 minutes 16 seconds, this is the longest track, but as with all of them you wish it didn't have to end.

Wayne Shorter's immortal classic *Footprints* receives one of the most unusual and imaginative treatments yet, the 7/4 time helping emphasise its Middle Eastern connections and the somewhat mysterious, even eerie aspects of the melody. Yet another great classic, Herbie Hancock's *Watermelon Man*, helps eliminate a block here - whenever thinking of it, until now I haven't been able to get a certain (superb in its own right) comedy version of a few years ago of this fabulous tune out of my head. Weinstein's version on *Timbasa* has not only restored this tune for me, it is undoubtedly one of the most exciting interpretations yet. A particular standout also is a superb bass solo from Panagiotis Andreou.

Yet another classic, Chucho Valdez's *A Ernesto*, provides another superlative showcase for Mark Weinstein's flute, here to the beat of Cuban *guaracha-son*. At nearly half-way through, Laugart opens his piano solo with a fun quote from that old 1930s "turkey" *Yes Sir, That's My Baby* and then lets fly, dominating the rest of this fabulous piece. At just over nine minutes the second longest track on *Timbasa*, the unforgettable Ellington/Mills/Tizol classic *Caravan* here receives its most distinctive treatment yet. Over the years, I must have collected somewhere between a hundred and two hundred different versions of this entrancing masterpiece of the Duke and heard hundreds more. Yet none quite as memorable as this! *Caravan* opens with a bass and vocalese intro of over two minutes, highlighting the Middle Eastern roots of this tune as well as the Arabic/Hebraic influences in Afro-Cuban music. This intro in itself is stunning and almost worthy of a separate track. As the percussion and piano come in the scene is set for Weinstein's flute to eloquently state the theme and then sore off into flights of fancy, answered by Laugart's equally eloquent ivories. Funk, Yoruba-based Afro-Cuban *yesa* rhythms and Middle East melt and meld together as a single cohesive whole.

The second of Martinez's originals, *Encuentro*, has Weinstein's soaring flute solo followed by an extensive fine solo from Laugart, in turn followed by one from Andreou, before letting the percussion reign supreme for a while. *Kavaklari Cubano*, an Andreou and Weinstein original, is based on a Turkish folk song. This provides the perfect showcase for Weinstein's wonderful rich bass flute as well as Andreou's vocals. The percussion is also out of this world. Featuring the Afro-Cuban religious drums of the *Santeria* tradition, the *batá*, here the drumming often reminds of the *darbuka*, sometimes even of the Iranian *tombek* or Indian *tabla* in its intricacies and subtlety of tone.

All too soon the closer of *Timbasa* is reached in the form of an old, familiar Weinstein original, the classic *Just another Guajira*. First heard on Weinstein's revolutionary sensational 1960s cult album *Cuban Roots*, this particular version is the finest yet. Blues-inflected and elegant, *Just another Guajira* rounds this album off perfectly with some soaring flute improvs from Weinstein.

As has been remarked already, the soloing on *Timbasa* is simply sensational all round. And Weinstein's in particular sounds on finer form than ever, somehow more confident and assertive, authoritative. The voice of his flutes, whether concert, alto or bass, is also attaining

ever greater heights of perfection. Mark Weinstein at last seems to be finding some of the confidence to believe that he really does belong up there with the other true jazz greats of the past, which he unquestionably does.

The length of the tracks tends to be nice and meaty, with three of them being of a reasonable length for surely getting lots of airplay. Surely as sensational, compelling, and consistent an album as Timbasa cannot fail to bring the success and acclaim it so richly deserves.

Mark Weinstein's Timbasa is one hell of a party that you just don't want to stop. Latin jazz, or Afro-Cuban jazz, at its very finest. An album that's just pure magic. No collection of Latin music, Latin jazz, Afro-Cuban jazz or for that matter World music could ever be complete without Timbasa. Or really, any good music collection. Or even if you just like to groove. Best listened to in fire-proof clothing and surrounds though! Hot hot HOT!

Tales from the Earth

Mark Weinstein & Omar Sosa

SoundsOfTimelessJazz.com

Witnessing the creation of new music as it happens is one of the best experiences one can have whether you're a musician or a spectator/listener. On TALES FROM THE EARTH, multi-instrumentalists Mark Weinstein and Omar Sosa got together with some of their most revered collaborators to create a wonderful collection of 14 songs that will move you, make you happy and refresh your spirit. Opening with "Sunrise," the song is an appropriate homage to the beauty of daylight breaking across the horizon and awakening the inhabitants of Earth. Following by the prayerful "Invocation," which instills a feeling of gratitude to the Creator, the marimba, played here by Omar Sosa, and the flute, played by Mark Weinstein, share a dance of peace and spirituality that will refresh your spirit. The music of Africa is as rich as the inner souls that inhabit her and here, the African sounds interact with dialogue and evolve into unique musical conversations among balafon virtuoso Aly Keita, guitarist Jean Paul Bourelly, Stanislou Michalak on bass, drummer Marque Gilmore, vocalist/percussionist Aho Luc Nicaise and Mathias Agbokou. The stories told on TALES OF THE EARTH are astounding and immediately conjure up the beauty, exoticism, wilderness and peace the great Mother Continent has to offer her children. Peace and love. Buy TALES FROM THE EARTH right now! Simply click on the CD cover image.

By Brad Walseth
JazzChicago.net

Perhaps the hardest-working man in jazz today, flautist Mark Weinstein is back with yet another Latin jazz release - this time with award-winning Cuban percussionist Pedrito Martinez (with whom he worked on his *Algo Mas* and *Con Alma* albums. Busy having just released *Jazz Brasil* with Kenny Barron and with another shortly to be released (the Brazilian-flavored *Lua e So* - he has released 15 albums since 1996) Weinstein was somewhat reticent when approached by Martinez to record again, but was convinced when the percussion master said he could supply a group of truly exceptional (mostly) Cuban musicians. The album was recorded in one day-long session and captures the excitement that is produced when great players are put together and set free. Classic tunes covered include "Milestones," "Footprints" (in 7/4 - a true highlight!), Herbie Hancock's "Watermelon Man," Chucho Valdes' "A Ernesto" and a rollicking "Caravan," while four originals (including a great album-ending version of Weinstein's "Just Another Guajir" - revisited from his 1960's classic *Cuban Roots* album). As always, Weinstein's flute is dancing and delightful - at times recalling the groundbreaking Herbie Mann, while pianist Axel Tosca Laugart is an absolute knockout (Weinstein says he is the best he has recorded with - high praise considering he has played with Barron and Chick Corea). Imaginative electric bassist Panagiotis Andreou (check his introduction to "Caravan" where he sings and plays along), drummer Mauricio Herrera and bongo/bata player Ogduardo join Martinez to form what Weinstein says is the best rhythm section he has ever played with (yet another amazing claim from someone who has played with some of the best Afro-Cuban groups of the last fifty years). It is hard to argue

with Weinstein as the rhythm section really shines. Despite the energetic and intricate drumming and juicy bass solos, the music here is often as relaxed as an island beach - and although it is toe-tapping, it doesn't raise your heart-rate to unacceptable levels like some of the most blistering and in-your-face Afro-Cuban music. The 69-year-old Weinstein is experiencing a resurgence of his career and continues to produce some of the finest recordings of Latin jazz around. No sign of slowing down either - he says he has two new tango albums in the work.

By Dan Bilawsky
AllAboutJazz.com

It's not uncommon to hear about an alto player moving to tenor, or vice versa, in an attempt to grow musically, develop a different sound or avoid getting stale. Likewise, plenty of people branch out within the woodwind or brass families, like a saxophonist learning to double on flute or a trumpet player doubling on valve trombone. Yes, these things do happen fairly often but you rarely hear about masterful jazz trombonists switching to flute. Mark Weinstein is the exception.

Weinstein, while playing trombone in the 1960s, worked with the cream of the crop, straddling the Latin and jazz communities. He worked with everybody from Chick Corea and Eddie Palmieri to Clark Terry and Charles Mingus. Though he retreated from the music scene in the early '70s, earned a Ph.D in Philosophy and became a college professor, music must have been on his mind at times. Eventually, he returned to the music scene and was reborn as a flautist. Weinstein began recording a string of strong and musically diverse albums in the late 1990s and he keeps moving forward.

Timbasa features Weinstein performing some killer Cuban jazz with an exceptional band. Axel Tosca Laugart lights up the music from behind the piano and Panagiotis Andreou has a firm presence on bass. The material chosen for this album, much like the music from Weinstein's *Con Alma* (Jazzheads, 2007), is a mixture of Latin-ized arrangements of jazz classics and new compositions. While that recording features flute, bass, piano, drums and percussion, *Timbasa* benefits from having two percussionists, with Pedrito Martinez and Oguardo Diaz - alongside drummer/percussionist Mauricio Herrera - creating some rumbling and tumbling patterns, and bringing some Latin fire into the mix.

While a few of the classics, like "Watermelon Man," already fit well within this genre, Weinstein takes some other tunes by the likes of Miles Davis and Wayne Shorter and reshapes them to fit his own vision. Weinstein and Laugart both get plenty of solo space on the album and Andreou bridges the gap between these two men and the percussion section. The bassist also gets some room to let loose and his explosive bass and vocals on the introduction to "Caravan" are a treat. Some of the most heart-pounding moments on the album take place when the pitched instruments provide simple vamps and the three-man percussion wrecking crew is left alone to create a storm beneath them. With the exception of the Middle-Eastern tinged mysticism of "Kavaklari Cubano," this music is high-energy party jazz and Weinstein always seems to find the right balance between the sound of a loose jam and that of a tight Latin unit.

by Chip Boaz

Collaboration lies at the heart of any musical endeavor, and often times, a project's success relies upon musicians working together coherently. This concept proves ultimately important in Latin Jazz ensembles, where trust and collective thought enable truly meaningful and interesting improvisation. For many groups, collaboration can be a learned skill; it becomes the art of give and take, where musicians learn when how to grab the spotlight and when to support their peers. Sometimes this lesson sinks into the ensemble quickly, and for some musicians, it takes years of shared musical experiences to refine their group process. Live performance often serves as the training ground for this process, giving musicians the chance to rise or fall through their team work. The recording studio tests the heart of a group's collaborative spirit, capturing their musical output and exposing the success or failure of the group's mutual work. When a group of musicians come together for the first time in the studio, they face an interesting challenge - since they don't have years of trust built into their relationships, their collaboration needs to be based strictly upon musicality. Success involves an open mind, a mature artistic attitude, and high level musical skills; a hole in any of these areas can curse the project. Flautist Mark Weinstein works with a group of young Cuban musicians on Timbasa, creating a highly collaborative environment that sparks some amazingly original and exciting interpretations of standards and new compositions.

Imaginative Arrangements Of Jazz Standards

Weinstein and his group turn several classic jazz standards inside out with imaginative arrangements and impressive performances. The drummers establish a very modern take on a son montuno as Weinstein and pianist Axel Tosca Laugart visit the classic melody on Miles Davis' "Milestones," accompanied by long round notes from bassist Panagiotis Andreou. Weinstein explodes into a flurry of quick runs over the assertive accompaniment from the rhythm section, delivering a fast and furious display of creativity. Laugart quickly contrasts Weinstein with a quietly intense entrance into his solo, using tense syncopations to drive the band into energetic solos from Ogduardo Diaz on bongó, Pedrito Martinez on congas, and Mauricio Herrera on drums. Andreou lazily implies the classic bass line to Wayne Shorter's "Footprints" before the rhythm section kicks into a seven beat cycle behind the melody with short leaps into cha cha cha on the turnaround. Weinstein floats over the odd meter groove with a relaxed fluency, spinning long lines full of rapid runs and sharp accents. Laugart moves around the seven beat cycle with a confident vigor, using the groove's natural tension to his advantage, until Andreou makes a short statement, running low melodic lines through the texture. The rhythm section places their own mark upon Herbie Hancock's "Watermelon Man" with a laid back cha cha cha groove while Weinstein personalizes the familiar melody with liberal embellishments. Weinstein flies over the funky background with a bluesy edge, prodding the rhythm section with assertive lines, while Laugart uses broad open washes of understated lines to build his statement. Panagiotis combines rising sequences and virtuosic lines to construct an attention grabbing solo before the rhythm section provides an off-set series of attacks for an exciting improvisation from Martinez. These pieces find the group working together to produce highly original arrangements and awe inspiring performances that shed new light upon classic tunes.

Applying A Distinctive Performance Approach To Latin Jazz Pieces

The group adds their distinctive performance approach to repertoire closer to home, developing interpretations of pieces from the Latin Jazz world. Quick ascending lines explode into a broad pedal tone full of forward motion on Chucho Valdes' "A Ernesto" before the rhythm section establishes a short vamp for Weinstein's improvisation. The flautist charges into a frenzied combination of bebop licks and traditional Cuban phrases, inspiring enthusiastic response from Laugart and Herrera. A sharp break from the rhythm section allows Laugart to storm into his improvisation with a bluesy swagger evoking the spirit of the song's composer with virtuosic flights of jazz melodies that lead into an impressive series of solo from all three percussionists. Andreou melds amazing bass technique, impeccable musical construction, and sung accompaniment into an inspiring introduction for Duke Ellington and Juan Tizol's "Caravan." After Weinstein visits them melody with a free sense of phrasing, Laugart dramatically enters his improvisation, stretching musical lines into a long statement full of staggering rhythms and engaging melodies. Weinstein crafts an interesting solo that explores the edges of the song's harmony, moving into a stunning timbale solo from Martinez. A laid-back funky vamp from Laugart and Andreou give a boogaloo feel to Weinstein's "Just Another Guajira," while Weinstein plays the familiar melody over the band. Laugart jumps into a tasteful improvisation that captures the song's laid back feel, followed by Weinstein, who pushes the groove with quick lines and a bluesy edge. Andreou storms through a ferocious improvisation that combines percussive lines with chordal passages, and after Weinstein returns to the melody, Martinez opens into a polyrhythmic improvisation full of energy and class. These pieces once again offer a different perspective on familiar tunes, utilizing the collection power of the group to reinvent Latin Jazz classics.

Exploring Original Compositions From The Group

Weinstein appreciates the contributions from his group, taking the time to explore several of their original compositions. Jaw dropping percussion fills explode over a clave figure on Martinez's "Timbasa," leading into a rhythmic unison melody from Weinstein, Laugart, and Andreou. Weinstein stretches across a long improvisation, taking his time to build his ideas into a wild frenzy before Laugart glides over the keyboard with a distinct sense of rhythmic placement and thematic development. Andreou starts his statement with understated melodies, opening into impressive runs across his instrument until a spectacular percussive trade between Diaz, Martinez, and Herrera. Weinstein riffs around Andreou's Middle Eastern vocal scat on "Kavaklari Cubano," until batá drums provide a Cuban background to the cultural blend. Andreou sings along with his bass and Laugart on a slow and contemplative melody, as the group builds into a dramatic flourish for a contemplative improvisation from Weinstein. The group wraps around the vocal melody again, taking dynamic turns to let Andreou and Weinstein extend their ideas and contribute thoughtful embellishments. Laugart introduces an engaging vamp over driving percussion while Andreou riffs on Martinez's "Encuentro," leading into a catchy melody from Weinstein. The rhythm section turns up the heat behind Weinstein's improvisation, driving the flautist to hit sharp rhythmic accents and fast runs. Both Laugart and Andreou thrive off the song's addictive groove, building attention grabbing solos, until aggressive percussion statements from Herrera, Martinez, and Diaz send the song into an exciting climax. These tracks allow Weinstein to share his ideas with the group and bring their compositional voices into the forefront of the album.

A Memorable Collaboration Between Master Musicians

Weinstein displays a supremely collaborative spirit on Timbasa, letting his musicians stretch

their chops and enjoying the outcome. Despite the fact that this studio date represents an early effort from the group, Weinstein enables an environment where all the musicians work together fluently, showing both individuality and team effort. There's a distinctly modern approach from Weinstein's sidemen throughout the recording, mixing equal pieces of timba energy, Irakere influenced experimentation, and contemporary jazz harmony. While the band's roots differ from Weinstein's background, the flautist has spent his career exploring new and challenging repertoire. The band aggressively pushes Weinstein with their high energy approach and the flautist responds with some of his most engaging playing. As the musicians approach standards, they respect tradition, but they also rip each tune open and search for their own identities. Weinstein encourages the exploration and enters each familiar tune with a new perspective that delivers inspired playing. Laugart emerges as a potentially major voice in Latin Jazz piano, while Andreou presents a unique and impressive bass presence that demands attention. Martinez, Diaz, and Herrera supply a triple threat, providing an unstoppable percussion section with an interactive spirit and considerable improvisation abilities. Each song on *Timbasa* unfolds with inspiring and joyful performances that make this a memorable collaboration between master musicians.

by J Hunter
AllAboutJazz.com

Back in the day, people going to their first Grateful Dead show were given this advice: "If you get bored, just watch the drums." The spirit of that advice is applicable to flautist Mark Weinstein's latest CD. Not that *Timbasa* is boring, far from it-if anything, this should be counted as the first great jazz party disc of 2010. But as great as Weinstein is here, his percussion section's overall performance is off the charts.

On balance, "Milestones" is one of the more conservative pieces in trumpeter Miles Davis' catalog. But put Cuban percussion masters like drummer Mauricio Herrera, conguero/co-producer Pedrito Martinez and bongo master Ogdardo Diaz behind this disc-opener, and things get tribal in a big hurry. Weinstein's lines are absolutely thrilling as the piece builds momentum, and even though the group pulls back for Axel Tosca Laugart's piano solo, the piece's edge stays extremely sharp.

Weinstein may not have the accuracy of Dave Valentin or Herbie Mann, but he more than makes up for that with a relentless passion that runs through every piece on *Timbasa*. He stuffs Wayne Shorter's "Footprints" into a 7/4 time signature and makes it work, albeit with a terrific assist from Laugart. Herbie Hancock's "Watermelon Man" doesn't have to be stuffed, because it lends itself perfectly to the disc's Cuban vibe, as does the Duke Ellington/Juan Tizol collaboration "Caravan" and Chucho Valdes' calypso-on-steroids rave-up "A Ernesto."

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While it's good that jazz can be the most cerebral music around, it's also a good thing to turn the mind off and let the mojo run things for a while. Timbasa is a satisfying reminder that sunshine, sandy beaches and Mojitos are on the other side of the snowstorms of winter.

By Peter Westbrook
JazzReview.com

Those who believe, with F. Scott Fitzgerald, that "There are no second acts in American lives" should check out Mark Weinstein. Originally a trombonist who developed a role for the trombone in Latin music while working with Herbie Mann, among others, Weinstein gave up music to pursue a career as a professor of philosophy. Eventually, he got back into music, but for his second chapter he picked up the flute instead of the trombone. Since then he has produced a series of highly interesting recordings that explore a range of cultural settings--Brazilian, Cuban, African and Jewish, as well as straight-ahead American jazz. He has a very definite opinion about the future role of the flute in these genres. As he told me, in my book *The Flute in Jazz: Window on World Music*:

"The prevalence of the flute in world music and the richness of its expressive capabilities, give hope to flutists who want to use the instrument to make a contribution to jazz. . . The future for flute is to draw broadly from world genres, especially Latin American, African and Indian music, a direction increasingly evident among jazz musicians as world music--based jazz proves both a way to move beyond the epochal contributions of the fifties and sixties, and path toward new sonic terrain. The acoustic context of much world music is flute-friendly. . . Flute is without equal in its ability to blend with the string and percussion instruments used in much world music, and permits the basis in world music to remain true to its sound and texture even when the flute adds jazz harmonic, melodic and rhythmic elements extending the basic forms."

Weinstein's most recent release demonstrates his commitment to the flute in world music in his own work. And it was a big commitment. His previous sessions have drawn on the New York/New Jersey music community to find expert exponents of these various genres, from Cuba or Brazil for example, who have helped him assemble material and ensembles to record it. In this case, however, Weinstein went much further afield.

The full story of how this session came about can be read in a detailed blog that Weinstein has posted at his website. Artists commenting on their work in this way is a really helpful idea--I think more artists should do this. To quote from these notes:

"The session was put together by guitarist Jean-Paul Bourelly, a master musician and one of my all-time friends. . . Jean Paul was producing a concert in Berlin called the Black Atlantic, a week long festival of African based music from Europe, the US and other places. . . He mentioned that [Cuban pianist] Omar Sosa would be there and a number of African musicians including balafone virtuoso Ali Keita. Omar had recorded an album with me in 2001, *Cuban Roots Revisited*, and I knew he was originally a classically trained mallet player (vibes, marimba, tympani, the works) and so I had a brain-storm. Go to Berlin and make an album with vibes, marimba, balafone (an African marimba and the reason they play marimbas in Central and South America), African percussion and myself."

Weinstein acted on his brain-storm; the result is the music heard on this recording. Given the diversity of the musicians and the limited preparation time the results are remarkably successful. Weinstein describes the musicians as follows: "Me (a New York Jew), a Polish bass-player, three African musicians, Omar Sosa--a black Cuban, an African-American drummer, and Jean-Paul, of Haitian-American descent." As for the preparation: "We went into the studio with absolutely nothing, nothing planned, no music, not even a concept, and recorded two days of free-jazz based on African themes. It was amazing!"

Amazing indeed! I have been disappointed by a lot of the free music I have heard recently. Having worked in that genre with the Spontaneous Music Ensemble of London and others in the early 1970s, I have not much that has changed in that field in the subsequent 35 years. Too much free music is not really free--it falls in a very narrow stylistic range, creating a box for itself that it can never seem to break out of. And few free players seem to pay attention to dynamics, shape, nuance--in short, to musicality.

Tales From The Earth has a distinctly different character, primarily because, while it is free music, it is grounded in a traditional music tradition. Several tracks begin with the two African drummers and builds from there, with the other instruments, percussion, strings and eventually flute, laying down melodic and cultural layers on top of them. Other selections open with bass or flute but the rhythmic framework is never far away. Consequently, this cannot be said to be totally free music. The combination of African sensibilities with free jazz produces a genre of its own; this is certainly not African music in its pure form, and the freedom of the jazz players is curtailed by the structures that the more traditional musicians impose. But the various influences dovetail beautifully, and all of them create a perfect foil for Weinstein's flutes.

It should be added, of course, that the African influences are reflected in Omar Sosa, the Cuban, whose mallet work on vibes and marimba is central to much of the improvisation. The status of Cuban music as part of the African diaspora is well known. It is reinforced here, especially in the expression of historical and religious connections heard on the second track, Invocation, where, as Weinstein puts it, "three sons of Africa, one Cuban, still held to the same religion, and could join together in prayer." One manifestation of the sense of unity that pervades this session.

One Caveat, however. The end result heard here has been through extensive editing. Weinstein makes no pretense about this. It was unavoidable as he had to turn over four hours of music into one CD. He is very clear in his blog. "The real problem," he writes, "was finding the boundaries within the music that would enable us to extract an hour of music, divided into pieces of reasonable length from the extended improvisations." He continues, "Individual songs were edited out from the lengthy takes that we recorded. So the first day with three extended improvisations . . . resulted in seven different tracks. The second day was better organized, the improvisations shorter and more focused. But still a great deal of editing was required. A lot of great playing ended up being left behind."

There are, of course, purists who will object to this, considering it an aesthetic requirement to present free improvisation as it occurs, warts and all. But one might equally insist on reviewing, hearing, or reading early first drafts of great symphonies or novels, or of seeing raw footage before it is edited to create a movie. As a musicologist and, in an earlier incarnation as a literary critic, I have done my share of that, and I wouldn't recommend it.

Editing is part of every creative process, unless you are a pure genius like Mozart or J.S. Bach whose original manuscripts show few, if any, revisions. Beethoven's notebooks or Da Vinci's cartoons are of interest to musicologists and art historians. It is the finished symphony or painting that the artist wants the public to enjoy.

In this case, the music we hear is the result of careful planning, spontaneous performance, then meticulous editing. The end result is what it is. Those who wish to experience free music in the raw should go hear some live music. Those who want to a fine example of the interface between jazz and world music should check out Tales From The Earth.

By Chip Boaz
The Latin Jazz Corner

Most people associate Africa with a variety of musical styles, but in many cases, they simply can't establish a concrete connection between African music and genres from her Diaspora. Much of the problem lies in a lack of common knowledge about authentic African music. While many listeners may recognize sound bytes, they simply lack a working understanding of West African traditional or popular music. At the same time, music from the African Diaspora generally reflects a very different personality than the sound bytes that live in most people's consciousness. When West African citizens were brought into the New World, slavery shattered their musical foundations, and the pieces formed the basis of jazz, funk, salsa, rumba, and soul; these resultant styles only revealed traces of their African heritage. For the listener, the connection between Africa and her Diaspora remain an intangible relationship; for the musician, it becomes an artistic mystery without a simple answer. As the musician performs each of these different styles, they start to unlock different pieces of the puzzle. In order to honestly build an understanding, they need extensive experience in each style, and they often need to perform some serious research. Projects that bring these worlds together require immense dedication from all involved musicians for any chance of a successful blend. Flautist Mark Weinstein and pianist/mallet player Omar Sosa draw upon their years of deep performance experiences to build an intriguing blend of African music, jazz, Cuban styles, and more on Tales from The Earth.

Exploring Improvisational Ideas

Weinstein takes the opportunity to explore improvisational ideas over African influenced settings on many tracks. Vocalists Aho Luc Nicaise and Mathias Agbokou enter with a Santeria chant on "Invocation," leading into an addictive groove from drums and percussion while balafon player Aly Keita improvises. As Keita settles into a steady groove, Weinstein freely creates melodies, weaving in and out of the thick texture. Sosa follows Weinstein's statement with an assertive vibraphone solo that cleverly plays upon the percussive drive of the group. A 6/8 bell pattern segues into a melodic ostinato from Keita on "Walking Song," as drummer Marque Gilmore changes the texture with a backbeat. Weinstein allows flowing lines to float over the active texture, creating a sense of liberty and openness to his improvisation. As Weinstein continues to explore the setting, Nicaise begins a traditional song, which creates an interesting contrast to the flute solo. Bassist Stanislou Michalak intersperses bluesy licks in between rich double stops on "Elders Speak" as Weinstein furiously improvises. The exchange between the two musicians grows more intense as they both raise the intensity of their ideas, complimented by brash percussion accents. Michalak and Weinstein reach critical mass as the percussionists join with a groove, driving the

improvisations into a chaotic flight of wild phrases. A sea of bells and sparse balafon phrases provides a thin backdrop for a melodic improvisation from Weinstein on "Flirtation." As Weinstein builds his ideas, Gilmore falls into a broken funk and Michalak infuses a rootsy blues feel into his bass line. The three musicians continue to stretch their conception, moving the music into an interesting combination of African derived aesthetics. These songs find Weinstein winding his improvisational voice around this unique setting, which inspires some impressive work.

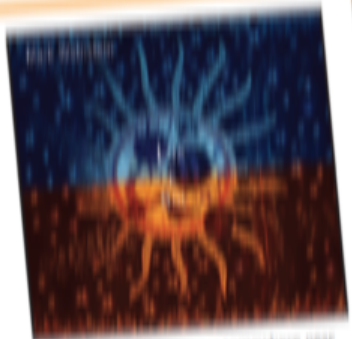
Prominently Featuring Vocals

Several pieces feature vocals prominently, calling upon a number of traditional songs and chants within an improvisational context. Nicaise begins "River Crossing" with a strong and confident song until a flurry of percussion storms into the mix amid subtle improvising from the rest of the band. The song takes on a definitely different feel as it moves over a funky drumbeat, jazz-fueled bass fills, and repeated balafon patterns. Sosa pushes the song into a furious forward motion with the smart insertion of quick improvised lines and sharp accents on the vibraphone. A thick layer of closely intertwining percussion patterns leads into understated improvising from Weinstein, Michalak, and Keita on "Men's Talk." As the drummers fade into the background, Nicaise leaps into a powerful traditional song, moving forward as the band improvises around him. The group cleverly plays with texture as Weinstein makes an improvised journey through the diverse musical landscape with lush elegant lines. A Cuban rumba pattern burns beneath an impassioned improvisation from Weinstein on "Spirit Messenger." Nicaise and Agbokou enter with repeated phrases that frame Weinstein's solo, which quickly reaches a furious drive. The band breaks down to racing percussion and vocals, leaving the song in a traditional mode, making the connection to Africa very apparent. The inclusion of vocals on these tracks connects the work more explicitly to African traditions, making the link with music of the Diaspora even stronger.

Emphasizing Pieces Of The Diaspora

Other pieces lean the group towards implications of the African Diaspora by emphasizing different musical elements. Guitarist Jean Paul Bourelly establishes an assertive funk line over a 6/8 rhythm while Sosa keeps a steady marimba pattern on "Children At Play." Bourelly pushes the band into high gear with a rock-tinged chordal pattern while Weinstein enthusiastically improvises. Sosa dives into an energetic statement, drawing off the band's forward motion and inspiring some active response. Gilmore's laid-back drum groove, Sosa's rich vibrato chords, and Weinstein's long flute tones infuse "Celebration" with a soulful funkiness. Weinstein plays upon this vibe with the deep rich tone of his bass flute, spinning bluesy lines full of long wandering phrases. Sosa lets the percussion ride their groove before slowly entering into a vibraphone solo, which he builds into a thick frenzy of notes. A gospel-tinged soulfulness fuels Bourelly's Motown influenced guitar groove and Gilmore's ultra laid-back groove on "Praise." The group follows this groove with a hypnotic faithfulness while Sosa inserts lush shimmering chords and Nicaise improvises an inspired vocal. A syncopated balafon ostinato explodes into a massive groove on "Gratitude" as Gilmore hits a heavy funk beat and Sosa nails a catchy marimba vamp. Sosa gradually opens his line into an engaging solo, which pushes the band with a sense of addictive enthusiasm and an upbeat attitude. Both Nicaise and Agbokou interject short vocal phrases that playfully move around the band's unstoppable groove. These songs demonstrate the vast range of African influence in several contemporary musics, and they highlight the musicians' vision between the different genres.

What They Are Saying About
Mark Weinstein's
LUA e SOL



Best Brazilian Jazz Record of 2008
Latin Jazz Corner

Mark Weinstein has always been a lover and student of Brazilian music. In 2008, he took his love of Brazilian music to a new level with *LUA e SOL*. The album is a collection of original compositions and a tribute to Brazilian music and culture. It's a beautiful blend of jazz and Brazilian music, and a true study of the style.

Chip Boaz | chipboaz.com

Mark Weinstein has long been an important contributor to Latin jazz. This time he's taken it to the next level with *LUA e SOL*. The album is a collection of original compositions and a tribute to Brazilian music and culture. It's a beautiful blend of jazz and Brazilian music, and a true study of the style.

Ken Dryden | allmusic.com

The rhythms on this new CD are infectious. They can take you to Brazil in a heartbeat. A perfect blend of jazz and Brazilian music. A perfect blend of jazz and Brazilian music. A perfect blend of jazz and Brazilian music.

Bob Collins | The Jazz Cafe

An album that captures the spirit of Brazilian music. A beautiful blend of jazz and Brazilian music. A perfect blend of jazz and Brazilian music. A perfect blend of jazz and Brazilian music.

Woodrow Wilkins | jazzreview.com

Mark Weinstein's *LUA e SOL* is a beautiful blend of jazz and Brazilian music. It's a perfect blend of jazz and Brazilian music. A perfect blend of jazz and Brazilian music.

Richard Sharma | rainiersworldofmusic.com

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Paul & Gama Rose | latinjazznet.com

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George W. Harris | jazzweekly.com

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Paul J. Youngman | vinlandia.net

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Mark Solofski | jazz.com

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Tom Hull | tomhull.com

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Bringing The Connection Into A Clear Light
 Weinstein and Sosa find organic connections between African music and styles from the Diaspora on *Tales from The Earth*, delivering a wonderfully creative statement of African identity. The album draws extensively upon improvised settings, wisely disregarding the notion of a composed tribute to the country. Without the crutch of a pre-composed score,

the musicians draw upon their most natural musical instincts. Weinstein and Sosa gathered an interesting group of musicians that cut across African and the Diaspora; their first instincts naturally result in authentic connections to Africa, Cuba, and beyond. The improvised setting brings the best pieces of jazz improvisation into the forefront, allowing the musicians to escape the trap of complex chord changes and simply express their personal identities. Both Weinstein and Sosa appear completely at ease in this context, producing both relaxed and intense music that draws upon the organic connection and tension between Africa and the Diaspora. Keita contributes a strong connection to African music with a wealth of authentic balafon patterns that blend into the music perfectly. Michalak and Gilmore add a healthy dose of tension into the mix, emphasizing their connections to funk, soul, and jazz. Nicaise and Agbokou provide a strong bridge between musical worlds, throwing equal doses of Cuban Santeria chants and African percussion into the music. With all these pieces in place, Weinstein and Sosa let all the musical elements freely interact on *Tales from The Earth*, resulting in a beautiful musical statement that brings the connection between Africa and her Diaspora into a clear light.

By David R. Adler
TimeOut New York

Omar Sosa, a Cuban pianist from the Bay Area, is all long robes and Santeria candles as he pursues a modern fusion informed by jazz, Afro-Latin roots and hip-hop culture. Brooklyn flutist Mark Weinstein has focused on postbop and Brazilian jazz on recent discs, each of which includes a fragment of Hebrew scripture on the sleeve. The Hebrew appears again on *Tales from the Earth*, a new collaboration that exudes the mystery and authentic street energy of Afro-Cuban music while reconciling the idiosyncrasies of both coleaders.

In 1967, when Sosa was two, Weinstein (then a trombonist) recorded *Cuban Roots*, an influential session with Chick Corea. Soon after his mid-'90s comeback as a flutist, Weinstein offered *Cuban Roots Revisited*, featuring Sosa. *Tales* is a reunion, but here, in a first, Sosa plays mallets. He locks in layered marimba patterns to complement Aly Keita's balafon, and uses vibraphone and minimal piano for harmonic color and subtle solo inflection. Drummer Marque Gilmore (of Sosa's *Afreecanos* Quartet) builds a bridge from traditional rhythm to splintery, cutting-edge beat-making, and bassist Stanislou Michalak keeps his lines fittingly sparse.

Weinstein's entrancing alto and bass flute work adds a sonorous darkness on several tracks, balancing the lively percussion and vocal incantations of Aho Luc Nicaise and Mathias Agbokou. *Tales* is also stamped with the earthy, stinging guitar of coproducer Jean Paul Bourelly, whose riffing on "Children at Play" sounds like a guimbri, straight out of Africa.

By Raul d'Gama Rose
All ABout Jazz

Tales from the Earth by flutist, Mark Weinstein and pianist/vibraphonist, Omar Sosa, is one of the most extraordinary musical expeditions in a long time. The need for a subtext is not necessary; the extraordinary depth and ethereal beauty of the music would suffice.

Nevertheless, once that subtext becomes evident, then the music touches parts of the body that much music might not. There is really no beginning and no end; this musical continuum needs only be entered with eyes wide shut and ears open; listening with the heart, soul, and every pore of the being is essential.

Perhaps it is the result of a childhood epiphany, which Weinstein recalled years later. Like epic music that is worshipful and healing, profoundly hypnotic as an interminable dance, it simply skips and rushes, cartwheels and catapults. The notes and phrases are alive and breathe as they entwine into each other like gilded braid. One strain, an idea, and then the voice of another world of music

unfolding-almost like an ocean tumbling in harness. Suddenly drums and kalimbas sing and, with a rumble and thud, quaking of the earth begins. Sadness flows as one of the darkest moments of human history is relived; then, not joy, but resignation-and peace. Such primeval beauty in melody, harmonic and utterly exquisite polyrhythms, slicing through voices that meander in more melodic counterpoint.



Weinstein probably imagined something like this all his life, however it is pure chance that brought the flutist together with guitarist extraordinaire, Jean-Paul Bourelly and piano wizard Sosa. The occasion was the Black Atlantic/Congo Square series that Bourelly was organizing in Berlin in 2004. For Weinstein, the opportunity to play with these musicians, as well as bassist Stan Michalak and balaphon master Aly Keita, was the lure. Then the chilling subtext comes into play-the venue for the recording was the same building that was once the Ministry of Information during the Nazi era. For Weinstein the project now must have been one by Divine design and the music reflects just that; none of the music was written. The music appears to have been dictated by a Divine muse and attendant spirits. Nothing else can explain the mesmerizing set that simply flows from track to track.

The heavenly suite opens with a brilliant "Sunrise"-dawn aglow and alive with kalimba and brass percussion. The stage for the exorcism of pain is set by contrapuntal voices led by Aho Luc Nicaise, and the musical healing begins. In this 14-part suite, unwritten yet unfolding with inspired beauty through each of its sections as it tracks the journey of the group-in a tale reminiscent of the ancient Legend of Gilgamesh-the musical expedition makes its "Forest Journey" and "River Crossing." Then "Praise" and the "Spirit Messenger," who helps them through the "Celebration" of lives lived and pain left behind. Santeria and catharsis for Mark Weinstein and the whole Human Diaspora as the extraordinary improvised musical experience closes appropriately with "Gratitude."

From Rainlore's World of Music

Mark Weinstein's latest album, *Tales From The Earth*, is due for release in October on the Otá label. As with every new Weinstein release, you can be sure of something very special. In fact, this album has been a very long time coming and has had me impatient to hear it for the last five years. It was in the summer of 2004 that Mark Weinstein first mentioned that he was going to Berlin to record an album with Jean-Paul Bourelly, Omar Sosa and some African musicians. I was already excited! When Weinstein returned from Berlin he was real excited, and thus my own excitement grew as indeed did my impatience to hear the results. Five years later, we can at last hear the results of some four hours or recording, condensed into just over an hour. Was it worth the wait? You bet!

In the summer of 2004, Jean-Paul Bourelly, that monster guitarist who can justly claim the mantle of Jimi Hendrix, already familiar here from his participation on Mark Weinstein's 2004/5 album *Algo Más* and 1998's *Jazz World Trios*, was involved in organising a festival of African music and the African music diaspora in Berlin. This was an opportunity too good to miss, and Weinstein asked Bourelly to organise a recording session for him while a number of musicians participating in the festival were available.

The musicians available for the recording session consisted of, in addition to Weinstein and Bourelly, Cuban piano and mallets phenomenon Omar Sosa (who is co-credited with Mark Weinstein here and whose regular label is releasing *Tales From The Earth*), best remembered here for his participation on Weinstein's 1999 *Cu-Bop* release *Cuban Roots Revisited*, here playing mainly marimba as well as vibes and piano, balafon virtuoso Aly Keita, Aho Luc Nicaise and Mathias Agbokou on percussion and vocals, Polish bassist Stanislou Michalan and Marque Gilmore on drums.

Bourelly's active contributions to the actual music are limited to two tracks due to sheer exhaustion after the festival, on the final day of which he had played with every performer on that day, not to mention having organised the festival as well as the recording session. While this may somewhat disappoint Bourelly fans, it certainly doesn't diminish Mark Weinstein's *Tales From The Earth* in any way. Bourelly's contribution in bringing these musicians together in the first place is a major credit to him.

The recording itself took place at UFO Studios over a two day period. As it turned out, UFO Studios were located in something of an iconic building in Berlin that once housed the notorious big-mouth Goebbels' propaganda ministry of the criminal thugs responsible for the holocaust. The fact that this circumstance of having to confront this demonic agony in such an intimate way didn't stop Mark Weinstein, a Jew, in his tracks is not only near miraculous but also a credit to Weinstein's resilience. One would hope that such a gathering of 'Untermenschen' at UFO Studios would have thoroughly rattled the bones of those thugs once resident there.

As for the music itself of Mark Weinstein's *Tales From The Earth*, this is not only completely, freely improvised, without any preconceptions or prior ideas, but also goes right back to the very roots of jazz, West African music. All the participating musicians are deeply rooted in and committed to the music of Africa in its various forms, and it is this shared commitment and dedication that provided the basis for their recording session. *Tales From The Earth* is completely unrehearsed and spontaneous. The album has been edited from about four hours of recorded music, but aside from this editing and sequencing has remained untouched and is 'as played' during the session. This process of editing down

some four hours, with individual segments sometimes lasting some twenty minutes, to about one hour as presented on the album, and furthermore to come up with fourteen tracks that not only make perfect sense in themselves but also form a wonderfully cohesive and coherent whole, must have been an extraordinarily painstaking and difficult one. The result is a tribute to both the genius of Mark Weinstein and his regular recording engineer Phil Ludwig, who together undertook this mammoth task.

With *Tales From The Earth* Mark Weinstein has taken free jazz to a whole new level. This is free jazz at its very best, free jazz that still makes sense to the listener and that isn't simply a sequence of more or less dissonant flights of fancy as sadly is so often the case. This music is a series of profound dialogues, steering clear of the conventional jazz solo. Everything is of the moment and in the moment. The resulting evolving conversations are not only coherent and make perfect sense, but moreover are exquisitely enjoyable and compelling.

In exploring its African roots, the very close connection of the music of the African diaspora in the Americas and the Caribbean becomes beautifully obvious, the spatial and temporal separation of the musical cultures is shown to be of so little consequence. The very roots of Afro-American, Afro-Cuban, Afro-Brazilian and Trinidadian music (especially 'tamboo bamboo' and even the relatively recent steel pan music) are all there, laid bare and made so easy to comprehend.

The fourteen tracks on *Tales From The Earth* are furthermore completely consistent with not a single weak track. As spellbinding as it is compelling and absorbing, as exciting as it is appealing and beautiful, this music is of uncommonly wide appeal. It will please free jazz aficionados and world music fans alike, and beyond.

Not all musicians play on all tracks - as already noted, Jean-Paul Bourelly only participates on two, for example. Weinstein himself plays on most, and his flowing melodies are a delight, showing him at his most lyrical yet. At times, he switches between his different flutes on the same track to superb effect, making especially fine use also of his bass flute. Omar Sosa's marimba in particular also shines, as does Aly Keita's balafon. The fine lead vocals of Aho Luc Nicaise also need singling out, as do his and Mathias Agbokou's percussion work.

Mark Weinstein, 'The Man with the Magic Flute', has once again worked his magic with *Tales From The Earth*. Always surprising, Weinstein has come up with an exciting album that is charming and haunting and he once again takes the jazz flute to new horizons. Again, Weinstein has given us music that is as completely fresh as it is refreshing.

Mark Weinstein's and Omar Sosa's *Tales From The Earth* is an album that's not to be missed by any lover of good music. As a bonus, it also gives the ghastly jewel case a miss in favour of a beautifully designed card sleeve with plastic CD holder inner.

From CD Roots.com

Flautist Weinstein and Sosa on marimba and vibraphone (with an occasional piano piece) are joined by the global ensemble of Jean Paul Bourelly (guitars) Aly Keita (balafon) Marque

Gilmore (drums) and vocals and percussion by Aho Luc Nicaise and Mathias Agbokou. Deeply spiritual and moody, these two artists seem to have found new depth in each other's work. Highly recommended!

Lua E Sol

By: Raul d'Gama Rose

LatinJazzNet.com

The amazing thing about Lua e Sol the new record by Mark Weinstein, is that might easily have passed like a ship in the night. If it did, it would appear to be a case of history repeating itself, for his historic recording, Cuban Roots (Catalogue Music, 1967) was similarly treated - almost as if it did not matter, when in fact it was one of the earliest and most important records of that and any time in Latin Jazz musical history. This should never happen to this record, Lua e Sol for several reasons. It is time that Weinstein takes his rightful place in musical history - somewhere near the top - as an instrumentalist, composer and innovator when it comes to letting the various idioms of music flow in the flue of his various woodwinds.

That Weinstein has both a masterful understanding of the flute, and control of its tonal palette is like a mathematical constant. That he is able to control his breath to such a superhuman extent and create such an exquisite sonic language on such a difficult instrument is all too magical. Then there is the concept or theme of this record - Lua e Sol - moon and sun, dark and light. And then there is the music itself, which when listened to reveals not only just how modern and contemporary it is, but also the allegorical side of the record. It is a musical, but also a human journey that examines the nooks and corners of darkness and light. It is inspirational to discover source of the sound and its purity... To hear how the music ascends to a superior plane... And that has only happened because Weinstein has subordinated himself to the source of creativity and its instrument - the breath of the musician and the fingers that manipulate the instrument that whirls and twirls notes, phrases and sounds.

This record uses a Brazilian medium and delves into that music milieu as well, to reveal its tonal colors in shades of black and white, dark and light, and the cool and heat of the interstellar symbols that have come to be the iconic sources of that light and dark. Baden Powell and Vinicius de Moraes' "Canto de Ossanha," and the Joao Donato/Gilberto Gil piece, "Emorio" - especially the latter - with its use of bass and alto flutes, beautifully describe the idiomatic approach to the record. The Pixinguinha songs too, though short, are remarkable as well. Weinstein's own compositional contributions to the record, "Estrelinha," and the title track, "Lua e Sol" appear to be headed to the realm of the classic as musical programs as well as vehicles for the flute.

And of course there is the interplay between the masterful musicians who make up the quartet. Romero Lubambo has always been on the cutting edge of the guitar. His is a sensitive and emotional approach to the instrument and he is the consummate accompanist and soloist whenever he is called to play that role. Nilson Mata is, together with Zeca Assumpcao and only a handful of others, the premier bassist to come out of the Southern

part of the American continent. His work with the great Don Pullen on the Afro Brazilian Connection records is now legendary. Mata is exquisite in the bowed entry to the title track. And Cyro Baptista joins Nana Vasconcelos and Paulinho da Costa in a sublimely skilled percussion triumvirate. Baptista is not conjurer of such immense skill that comparisons to someone like Liszt on the piano would not be such a stretch.

Remarkably, this record is not just a profound musical statement, but also one of the most entertaining expressions in sound as well. It is also a master class in the playing of the flute. It is one for a time capsule of this day and age.

By: James Lamperetta
The Saratogian

This time of year top-ten lists abound. On any given day, the few dozen records that I covered in print this past year could easily occupy a slot somewhere at the top of my list.

For each title that gets ink, there are a few others for which there just isn't enough space. So, I'd like to start the New Year by offering a tip-of-the-cap to some worthwhile discs from the past year that you might wish to consider checking out. Jazz has had very few full-time practitioners of the flute. Herbie Mann, Hubert Laws, and Dave Valentin quickly come to mind. Many other such as Rahsaan Roland Kirk and Yusef Lateef have very capably included flute as part of their instrumental arsenal.

Flautist Mark Weinstein has been a part of the scene for more than four decades, yet his is a name many aren't familiar with.

Last year he released a pair of albums which should go a long way toward garnering him overdue and well-deserved recognition.

"Straight No Chaser" is a solid date on which he is at the helm of a quartet that includes guitarist Dave Stryker. Comprised primarily of original music, gems by Sonny Rollins, Wayne Shorter, and Thelonious Monk's title track provide important points of reference that Weinstein is eminently capable of playing straight-ahead jazz.

On "Lua e Sol" he artfully mines the Brazilian vein. Ably abetted by the classical guitar of Romero Lubambo and percussion from Cyro Baptista, much of the disc rides a gentle lilt as it shimmers with genuine South American warmth.

A lesser known facet of Brazilian music bubbles to the surface on the title track. Weinstein describes it as "that very dark avant-garde thing that Brazilians do that not too many people know about."

Other moody ports-of-call include the introspective "Emorio" and the lovely ballad "Pra Machucar Meu Coracao," featuring bass flute and alto flute respectively.

Breezy and easy, these two CDs are toe-tappers which will go a long way toward warming up a frosty winter night.

**

And lastly, McCoy Tyner's place in the jazz pantheon is secure. One could easily forgive him for opting to rest on his laurels.

"Guitars" is a CD/DVD package on which the legendary pianist is heard in the company of Bill Frisell, Marc Ribot, John Scofield, Derek Trucks, and banjo monster Bela Fleck.

The pairings work in different ways to varying degrees, however, the spirit of the project is ultimately about continuing to explore and challenge artistic boundaries.

To that end Tyner succeeds, letting us know loud and clear that five decades later his jazz spirit remains undiminished.

By: Woodrow Wilkins
AllAboutJazz.com

It's fitting that flautist Herbie Mann is one of the luminaries who have led bands that included Mark Weinstein. Among his many attributes, Mann had a special way of bringing Brazilian music into his repertoire, and Weinstein does the same here with *Lua e Sol*.

Weinstein began his career as a trombonist, and was associated with a long distinguished list of musicians, among them Eddie Palmieri, Chick Corea, Cal Tjader, Tito Puente and Mann. Over the years however, he switched to flute and now plays in a variety of styles. The small ensemble backing him on *Lua e Sol* is comprised of Romero Lubambo on guitar, bassist Nilson Matta and percussionist Cyra Baptista.

"Floresta," penned by Matta, begins slowly with both Lubambo and Weinstein playing softly with subtle assistance from bass and percussion. Then, after the tranquil introduction, Matta begins an upbeat rhythm soon joined by Baptista who contributes, in addition to congas, sounds that bring to mind a South American rain forest. The track is an audible sightseeing tour about the Brazilian countryside—a tour that ends the same way it began: quietly.

The title song, written by Weinstein, features some shrill peaks by the flutist alongside emphatic plucking from Matta. This free-wheeling piece conjures images of encounters with native tribes, exotic animals and even the rainy season—if "Floresta" was a tour, "Lua e Sol" is an adventure through the same rain forest. During Lubambo's solo, Matta seemingly goes in his own direction while Baptista delivers the appropriate effects. Then the three of them feverishly pick up the action, complete with some wordless vocal calls, before things settle down and Weinstein returns with the melody. "Emorio," by two of Brazil's more widely known songwriters, Joao Donato and Gilberto Gil, is a charming piece. Weinstein employs the bass flute, followed by a snap-string solo by Matta. Lubambo also solos.

Only three of the ten songs on *Lua e Sol* are originals. The rest are Weinstein's interpretations of songs by several Brazilian composers. The result is as the name implies: a musical exploration of light and dark.

By: Mark Saleski
Jazz.com

Now here is a fine example of sensitive instrumental interplay. After the ominously low rumble of bass serves as an introduction, the structure of "Lua e Sol" is set with a series of guitar chords and arpeggios that are used as starting point for Mark Weinstein's flute excursions. The contrast between the rolling nature of the guitar figures and the angular

approach taken by Weinstein (recalling Anthony Braxton in spots) adds depth to the composition. As things progress, both the guitar and flute expand their sonic reach, with the great percussionist Cyro Baptista adding many exclamation points along the way.

By: Walter Kolosky
Jazz.com

Former Herbie Mann sideman Mark Weinstein first became interested in Brazilian music about a decade ago. On *Lua e Sol* he pays tribute to the "dark" and "light" sides of the Brazilian music tradition.

"Canto de Ossanha," the popularly covered tune written by Baden Powell and Vinicus De Moraes, most definitely comes from the light side. Cyro Baptista's Brazilian percussion and Nilson Mata's bassline open the piece to make room for a beautiful-sounding acoustic guitar played by Romero Lubambo. Flutist Weinstein then enters to handle the lion's share of the lilting melody. This is followed by a long solo section on which Weinstein nimbly climbs up and down the scales quite nicely, thank you. Lubambo follows with a wonderful acoustic turn.

For its climax, the song returns to its brighter-side-of-life roots.

I have alluded to something in other reviews of jazz flute music, and I'll say it again here. You have to be an exceptional flute player to hold most jazz fans' attention. Mark Weinstein can do that. To my ears, he is among only a handful who can.

By: Owen Cordle
The News & Observer

North America's love affair with the music of Brazil began 51 years ago, specifically with the Charlie Byrd-Stan Getz hit recording of "Desafinado," the lilting jazz samba by Antonio Carlos Jobim. Ever since, Brazilian tunes and rhythms have been a regular part of jazz. Thus, we have flutist Mark Weinstein's "Lua e Sol" (Jazzheads), a trip into the light and dark soul of the music.

"The flute just works perfectly with Brazilian music," Weinstein says in the liner notes. And when his cohorts are the Brazilians Romero Lubambo (acoustic guitar), Nilson Matta (bass) and Cyro Baptista (percussion), it works even more authentically.

You can hear echoes of Byrd in Lubambo's pulsing single-line approach and chording. Ensemble-wise, Matta's bass is richer and more aggressive than in the early days of the bossa nova, and Baptista's percussive interjections more colorful.

The performances include Matta's "Floresta," with Weinstein on alto flute, and a few Weinstein originals: the lovely "Estrelinha" and the avant-garde title track. The other tunes are by Brazilian composers. Weinstein, an often busy improviser, grows more impressive with each album.

By: Ken Dryden
AllMusic.com

Mark Weinstein has long been an important contributor to Latin jazz, even if the flutist is overlooked by many writers. This date focuses on Brazilian music, with his sidemen including two out of three members of Trio da Paz (guitarist Romero Lubambo and bassist Nilson Matta), plus percussionist Cyro Baptista. Utilizing concert, alto, and bass flutes, Weinstein has a subtle way with his instrument, focusing on bringing out the best in it rather than showboating with a heavy diet of overblowing. Starting with a hip, lively arrangement of the late Baden Powell's "Canto de Ossanha," the quartet has a lyrical, light touch. Weinstein also penned two originals, including the lush, deliberate "Estrelinha" and the more adventurous "Lua e Sol," which initially stretches the traditional conception of Brazilian jazz before moving into more familiar territory. Highly recommended.

By: Fabrizio Ciccarelli
Vinilemania.net

There are many virtuosos to look between, so watch out for the technical bravado gifted to us here. **Mark Weinstein** has always been distinct for his hot and sweaty Latin tones, fusing them with great sensibility to the tropical atmospheres with the *blue notes*: we have to acknowledge to him the refinement and the research that has since been given to the flute in *Latin jazz*. It has been done in such a way that his *sound* hasn't just originated only through his intuition or through his love for a "good sound". It's as much of an interesting capacity for composition and arrangements like this that has been growing remarkably in originality and of which is evident in the executive techniques used.

The tracks that are proposed here in "*Lua e Sol*" contain a narrative logic that stands out and manages to unravel itself through the predilection for a pluri-chromatic that is both personal and expressive in its dimensions. This in turn produces a coherent and agreeably pleasing phrasing that could be described as "colloquial". In such a way that "*Canto de Ossanha*" remains an image that isn't set in time and in the way in which it is presented. And we have to look at both **Baden Powell** and **Vinicius De Moraes** who form part of the nucleus in this strong and contagious emotive force; an ideal climate to release all of the elegance contained within this flautist. This force is also contained in *evergreens* "*Upa Negrinho*" from **Eduardo Lobo** and **Gianfrancisco Guarnieri** or "*Choro da Gafieira*" by **Pixinguinha**. In the name of a "progressive traditionalist" the flautist takes special care in the execution and relies on good taste which appears wholly simple in its exhibition, sometimes energetic, at times lively, other times swinging - dilated in conceived jets of solos, without using any calculated tricks: a truly convincing fervour, a tenacious faith in the profound sense of the pre-selected pentagram's used, substituted by the formidable interplay with a formation that is extremely explicit (the guitar of **Romero Lubambo**, the acoustic bass of **Nilson Mata**, the Brazilian percussion of **Cyro Baptista**).

Weinstein doesn't follow this pattern to all costs, he doesn't love the garish cabaret of lots of solos; he chooses to articulate the album according to a groove that is cared for - which is enthusiastic, actual in its whispered harmonics, imprinted with an identity out of the normal scheme of all other narcissistic's. It is in this respect that it would appear that there is a light that is magically switched on to "explain" to the listener every phrase in the creative process, and of all of its emotions that it contains.

By: Paul J. Youngman
Vinilemania.net

Mark Weinstein has surrounded himself with a fantastic group of Brazilian musicians who give everything of themselves musically on this his most recent visit to Brazil's musical

Mecca. Flutist, composer, Latin jazz master, Mark Weinstein brings us *Lua e Sol* and features Romero Lubambo (guitar), Nilson Mata (contra bass) and Cyro Baptista (percussion). In joining Mr. Weinstein on this recording these top rated Brazilian superstars add immeasurably to the feel and groove of songs by the classic Brazilian composers, De Moraes, Baden Powell, Pixinguinha, Donato, Barroso and Gil. Navigating the rich compositions with ease, they flow smoothly through afro-samba, choro and bossa nova tunes.

The opening song, “Canto de Ossanha” sets the course with bass and percussion introducing a soothing guitar melody that leads tastefully to the flutes calm and flowing verses. The flute carries the song through rich multi layered texture. Throughout the range of the instrument, from a low melodic whistle to a high melodious shriek, maintaining a calm and pleasant tone for the most part while inducing a relaxing state. One can nearly imagine lying on a beach in Salvador, moderate winds and rolling waves washing away your cares.

Lua e Sol is not all about the flute, the flute blends, flutters, floats and becomes one with the music. There are wonderful features from the band members. The bass playing of Nilson Mata is fantastic; he makes the bass speak a language unto itself. On songs like “Estrelinha”, an enchanting classical solo that brings tears to the eyes. On the title track, “Lua e Sol” he gives us a wild ride through a diverse mix of bass styles or “Emorio”, one of the best bass chants I’ve ever had the pleasure of listening to. A dialogue of soulful statements, he creates an urgency in his playing, with sustained lines, dynamic attacks, impeccable timing and feelings that transcend space barriers. This is one of the pre-eminent bassist’s of our times. Guitarist Romero Lubambo is given free reign on a few of the songs and his playing is exciting. On most of the songs he maintains a flowing rhythm with full chords, traditional jazz style with melodic lines interweaved. On the song “Isaura” he steps out for the introduction playing a classical sounding opener. He progresses to a fluid and fast paced rhythm and provides excellent accompaniment to the soloists including Nilson Mata who lays down a running bass work shop. For the song “Lua e Sol”, Lubambo gets to mix it up, with some wild rhythms, exciting passionate guitar playing at a very intense level. The closer “Upa Negrinho” features master Lubambo as he displays his incredible technique through the first solo portion of the song. A mix of jazz voicing, classical, Flamenco and Brazilian guitar styles that are played at a rapid tempo.

The master percussionist Cyro Baptista is in a class by himself, one of those percussionists who will create sounds that are completely unique. The inclusion of Baptista gives *Lua e Sol* an extra percussive push; a near orchestra onto himself the range of percussion that is featured is almost limitless. Every song has that Latin percussion troop feel to it. With an immense imagination, an intimate knowledge of all the Brazilian rhythms and the skill of a conductor, he weaves a multitude of percussion instruments into the mix in a seamless manner. The accompaniment is first rate nothing is overplayed or gets carried away. His playing is tasteful and completely natural to the groove. Interesting sounds, intriguing rhythms, exciting beats and excellent musicianship exemplify the performance of Cyro Batista on every track. A stupendous percussionist.

A superior Latin jazz album, *Lua e Sol*. Mark Weinstein, Nilson Mata, Romero Lubambo and Cyro Baptista have come together to create a high energy stirring performance of first rate quality - guaranteed to provide intense listening pleasure.

by: Chip Boaz
The Latin Jazz Corner

Once a musician finds their niche, it can be a comfortable place to be – it takes a brave artistic soul to keep pushing themselves into new directions. Many musicians experiment with different styles, but they generally bring outside influences into their realm. This is an admirable task, and it's one that stretches an artist to a certain extent. It's a fairly safe experiment though; when the artist finds their breaking point with the new musical material, they have all their standard conventions as a net. Truly stepping outside the niche involves a trip into a different and authentic musical context. This journey needs to involve the tradition's important songs and composers, but it also needs to be a trip taken with the genre's experts. Authentic musicians that have spent their life immersed in that genre are the perfect band mates for this endeavor; they are bound to push the artist. This is a time intensive task that involves repeated experimentation. The artist needs to feel comfortable taking risks in a public space and committing themselves fully to this new realm. Flautist Mark Weinstein has always been a brave and cutting edge musician; on *Lua e Sol* he takes a trip into the authentic world of Brazilian music with a strong cast of musicians.

Drawing Upon Compositions From The Group

Three interesting pieces come from musicians in the ensemble, placing a unique slant upon the music. The rich tone of Nilson Matta's bowed bass resonates underneath textural sounds on Weinstein's "Lua e Sol" until percussionist Cyro Baptista implies a funky groove underneath Weinstein's open melody. Both Weinstein and guitarist Romero Lubambo create adventurous improvisations with bold assertion as the rhythm section changes texture beneath him. The group creates structural contrast with freedom and texture, starting with standard patterns and falling into chaotic collective improvisation. Weinstein plays a lush melody out of time as Lubambo follows him closely on Matta's "Floresta" until Matta and Lubambo jump into an up-tempo *baiao* groove. Weinstein embraces the rhythmic propulsion enthusiastically with a bright solo, leading into Lubambo's virtuosic statement. The rhythmic momentum disappears suddenly, leaving Matta and Baptista alone to improvise freely until Weinstein and Lubambo return to the original theme. Lubambo provides a short unaccompanied introduction to Weinstein's "Estrelinha," leading into the reflective and beautiful melody. Weinstein grabs his solo section with an aggressive push, spinning flowing lines through the rich harmony. After a finely constructed improvisation from Lubambo, Matta makes an expressive melodic statement that utilizes register, technique, and strong development. These three pieces show the group both playing upon stylistic inspiration but also bringing individual concepts into their performance.

Digging Into Samba Compositions

Several tracks draw upon heavy samba compositions, taken from some of Brazil's top composers. Baptista's driving *pandiero* rhythm connects strongly with Matta's bass on the introduction to Baden Powell's "Canto de Ossanha" until Weinstein enters with the uplifting melody. Weinstein adds bluesy inflections to his statement, releasing into a major mode for the bridge. Lubambo takes a more jazz influenced approach, developing rich melodies that correspond closely to the harmony. Weinstein, Lubambo, and Matta play a unison riff to introduce Pixiguinha's "Choro da Gafieira," quickly moving into the contagiously up-beat melody. Weinstein riffs around the melody a bit as the group moves through the form several times, but this short track remains purely focused upon the groove. Lubambo starts Herivelto Martins and Roberto Roberti's "Isaura" with an attention-grabbing lick before

moving into a more rhythmic introduction. Following Weinstein's playful interpretation of the catchy melody, Matta presents an outstanding solo full of memorable musical lines, a blues edge, and fantastic bass chops. Weinstein follows with an inspired improvisation that reflects the song's joyful nature, while Lubambo builds his statement around the song's addictive rhythmic momentum. These songs allow Weinstein to jump headfirst into works from Brazilian composers and experiment with his group through interactive improvisations.

Traveling Through More Brazilian Styles

A few more pieces travel through a variety of Brazilian styles, reflecting the tradition's diversity. The deep and expressive nature of Weinstein's bass flute introduces João Donato and Gilberto Gil's "Emorio" amid a variety of sound effects from Baptista, including whispering, birdcalls, and jungle noises. Weinstein's instrument adds a dramatic effect to the melody that leads into Matta's logically constructed solo, full of powerful thematic development. There's a weight and depth to Weinstein's bass flute solo, as he makes every note matter until Lubambo adds an equally insightful yet busier improvisation. Beautiful jazz harmonies color Lubambo's brief introduction to Ary Barroso's "Pra Machuchar Meu Coração," until Weinstein flavors the melody with a gentle sway over a consistent bossa nova. Both Weinstein and Lubambo take full advantage of the song's rich harmonies, displaying skilled jazz chops in two short statements. They both return for a second run through the changes with more refined and melodic ideas, providing the perfect contrast to their initial ideas. Baptista maintains a driving brush pattern as Lubambo and Weinstein play a rhythmic melody on Gianfrancisco Guarnieri and Eduardo Lobo's "Upa Negrinho." Lubambo perfectly captures the song's energy with an active and bluesy solo that pushes the band into an unstoppable momentum. After a brief return to the melody, Weinstein provides a wonderful contrast with a more understated improvisation that invokes active participation from Matta and Baptista. These songs place the group in a variety of different contexts, invoking new and exciting ideas from them.

Making Brazilian Jazz His Own

Weinstein has made in-roads into Brazilian music on previous albums, but his work on *Lua e Sol* shines with a bold personality and a brave experimental spirit. His repertoire choices reflect his familiarity with Brazilian music and a deep study of the style. Yet he's demonstrated that on previous albums; the most striking piece here is the distinct sound created within this context. He experiments with elements of free jazz, textural changes, and interesting arrangement ideas, searching for a clean fit for his ideas into the Brazilian jazz realm. The use of Baptista's vast arsenal of percussive sounds and rhythmic ideas plays a big part in the group's sound – the exclusion of a drum kit removes the familiar while Baptista's endless creativity evolves into a range of colors. Lubambo and Matta are the perfect companions for Weinstein's exploration; their background in Brazilian music is unparalleled and their comfort with jazz improvisation allows them to spontaneously move in a variety of directions. Weinstein has spent a career moving out of his comfort zone and finding a way to assert his voice in each genre he visits; as Weinstein continues to explore Brazilian Jazz on *Lua e Sol*, his willingness to boldly take risks brings him one step closer to making the genre his own.

By: Bob Gish

Jazz Improv Magazine

Lua e Sol it is! What a great combination of musicians, song and Brazilian music - a panoply of perfections in every respect. And what else might one expect from the likes of Mark Weinstein, Nilson Mata, Cyro Baptista, and the incomparable Romero Lubambo. Combine that array with tunes by Baden Powell, Gilberto Gil, Ary Barroso, and Weinstein himself. Hear and under the moon and sun in an omnidirectional albeit southern alignment, this project is a winner in all respects.

Weinstein makes the name and memory of all his mentors over the years proud here, including such sun dialers as Herbie Mann, Eddie Palmieri, Cal Tjader, Tito Puente and others. What a stellar alignment of influence and result, cause and effect. Such a mapping is the stuff of awards, which are sure to come once this CD is "discovered", like watching and hearing a new planet swimming in our ken, enhanced if not characterized by the multitude of percussive effects lined up around Cyro Baptista..

The effects are at once startling and calming, as the occasion of each tune warrants. Just don't be surprised by the garlands of percussive Brazilian sounds- including vocal utterances, grants, bleatings, and deeply drawn breaths. Look and listen as you will beyond the earphones, behind the CD player, left, right or up and around and into the cosmos.

Weinstein knows the moods and ambiance of rumbas, bossa, choros, you name it, having come to woodwinds and the flute via the less airy trombone. And Lubambo knows it all beyond intellect and analysis by having lived it - a natural, as it were. So too do the tunes range from the ethereal and the qualities of fire and air down to the earthly if not phlegmatic, in the best sense of the word, whether expressed by string bass, bass flute, alto flute, or drum. Avant garde or folk in nature, inclusion and contrast abound.

Lubambo is more often thought of for his fine Latin guitar accompaniments to softly swaying vocalists and in a sense Weinstein's flute becomes that prominent, melodic voice in most of the arrangements. The guitar lends itself, however, to more than strumming. It too is a percussive instrument capable of many exotic effects. And Lubambo literally taps and hits them all.

Baden Powell's "Canto de Ossanha", starts things off and right away Brazil is in your spirit - familiar as a tune, familiar as a kind of blood consciousness. Everyone has danced to this melody, this mood in one way or another. It's as alluring as any entrancing piper can be, calling, calling to one's rhythmic soul. As such it's a quintessential Brazilian sound, fully realized by the instrumentation and carnival of players. Luis Bonfá, Jobim, or Hermeto Pascoal might all well be just around the next corner.

Weinstein's compositions "Estrelinha" and the title track, "Lua e Sol", follow up by brilliantly capturing the spirit and the substance of Powell's compositional epitome.

The former is a slow ballad building in platforming screscendos of sound and emotion, marked at strategic turns with wattery rattles, cymbals, and drums. The latter tune is a joyful romp through the musical hills and valleys of upper and lower registers, performed in a breakneck speed as if all in one gargantuan breath.

"Floresta," "Isaura" and "Chora da Gafieira" work as the torso of the tunes, providing the pulmonary pulse of the project. "Floresta," is a Nilson Matta composition with all the bizarre appeal of a kind of bass and triangle tango. "Isaura" features more of a coconut, bass, and guitar samba that gets even the most ossified sacroiliac into motion. Choro representation is taken care of by "Choro da Gafieira," which leads along all the real and imagined byways and beaches of Carnival.

"Emorio" is a showcase track, rich with all the compositional talents of Joao Donato and Gilberto Gill made all the darker and thicker by Weinstein's haunting bass flute lines and Lubambo's cat-like guitar meowing, providing just the right textural contrast to the heavier, repetitive flute breaths of all the dusky melody. Exotically beautiful.

"Segura Ele", on the other hand, is an airy, flighty little piece showcasing Weinstein's bee-like technique. While "Pra Machucar Meu Coracao" is a softer ballad made all the more tender by Weinstein's taking solace and providing it with the dulcet tones of his alto flute. Lubambo engages a more muffled, subdued technique in return with this soft chording and radiantly dexterous soloing. Again the melody shines through the darkness like a moon slowly, majestically rising over a mountain on a starlit night. Long track. Supurb call and response ending. Hauntingly beautiful. "Upa Negrinho" is sheer fun with long unison lines, ample trills, staccato guitar hits, rhythmic nuances of bass and percussion. Again Lubambo displays not just his versatility but his utter mastery of the guitar and its long tradition of compliance and expression for such music as this. Follow the piper, follow the bold strummer, follow the drummer, follow the resonating bass strings, and follow into the bliss of Brazil and its music of wonderment.

What They Are Saying About

Mark Weinstein's con alma

**Best Latin Jazz Flautist of 2007, Latin Jazz Corner
#2 in radio play nationwide, 16 weeks on the
JazzWeek charts and still going.**



Fans of Latin Jazz may have a new favorite CD for their collection. Mark Weinstein's latest exploration is entitled *Con Alma*, and features the brilliantly creative work of Mark Levine on piano, bassist Santi Debriano, and percussionists Mauricio Herrera, and Pedrito Martinez. Weinstein's work on multiple flutes is impressive to say the least, and the line up of tunes is a study in compositional mastery. *Con Alma* epitomizes the mature handling of great jazz blending the rhythmic, harmonic, and energetic stylings of Latin and African influences...Weinstein is the real deal and has once again called on some of the finest musicians to make a truly fine collection of Latin jazz winners. Highly recommended.

Jim Shulstad | jazzreview.com

"The late great Dizzy Gillespie would be so proud of the way flautist Mark Weinstein presents "Con Alma," played with finesse and "with soul." Latin grooves firmly grounded in the Afro-Cuban style. Exciting, engaging and a burner of hot Latin sounds, this album will definitely be a favorite of those who appreciate the essence of good Latin jazz."

Edward Blanco | ejazznews

Mark Weinstein in his latest album (*Con Alma*) demonstrates, that (flute) has become a masterful vehicle for his soulful expression...Compelling melodic invention, hard-bop harmonies and tasteful rhythmic counterpoint unfold like leaves dropping from a tree in Autumn. The colors mix and blend into a natural mosaic.

Jesse Varela | Latin Beat Magazine

Weinstein and his group cover serious material essential to the jazz tradition. At the same time, they establish themselves as composers and active participants in the music's history. The group commits itself to a serious exploration of jazz and Latin music.

Chip Boaz | allaboutjazz

"With all my soul, the poets translation of *Con Alma* and the feeling that pervades the new CD by Mark Weinstein...a quintet that plays jazz tunes...with a Latin groove...with exciting percussion, dynamic bass playing and...powerful straight ahead solos by Weinstein...inspired piano playing by Levine, while the rhythm section raises the roof with their ferocious playing."

Paul J. Youngman | villedania.net

"Con Alma...is lustrous and melodious, thanks to Weinstein's exclusive use of flute. His playing recalls the breathy sound and pithy articulations pioneered by former employer (Herbie) Mann".

Mark Holston | Jazziz, Latin Jazz Round-up

An interesting collaboration of mainstream and jazz classics delivered by a master flautist. Mark's artistic feeling and delivery style seems to exist for us on an astonishing variety of levels... simple in conception, yet it is sophisticated in its execution...what he offers his audience touches the greatest breadth of his listeners.

George W. Carroll | The Musicians' Ombudsman, ejazznews

An interesting thing about Mark Weinstein's new release "Con Alma" is that I had it in my car stereo for several days and neither me, or any other family members...or friends... ever thought to remove it...it is a compliment to the arrangements and playing of Weinstein and the musicians he chose for this project that has resulted in an extremely captivating sound.

Brad Walseth | jazzchicago.net

With his latest album *New Your* flutist Mark Weinstein continues to explore the roots of Afro-Cuban music and its relation to the kind of post-bop jazz that has thrilled generations...Tight and cohesive as a unit, yet emotionally loose and relaxed, as individual soloists, this acoustic quintet rates high marks...Recommended for all jazz audiences. *Con Alma* persuades with soul.

Jim Santella | LA Jazz Times

For Mark's other recordings,
www.jazzfluteweinstein.com



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MARK WEINSTEIN - REVIEWS

Con Alma

Mark Weinstein, "Con Alma"

Edward Blanco, EJAZZNEWS.com

The late great Dizzy Gillespie would be so proud of the way flautist Mark Weinstein presents "Con Alma," because it really is played with finesse and "with soul." Weinstein's latest Latin jazz album adapts a modern jazz repertoire into percussive Latin grooves firmly grounded in the Afro-Cuban style. Exciting, engaging and a burner of hot Latin sounds, this album will definitely be a favorite of those who appreciate the essence of good Latin jazz.

Weinstein cleverly translates traditional jazz standards into contemporary Latin jazz rhythms. There's John Coltrane's "Crescent," Wayne Shorter's "Fee Fi Fo Fum," and Thelonious Monk's classic "Evidence," all played in a Latin jazz beat relying heavily on Mauricio Herrera's drumming, Pedrito Martinez's congas and Mark Levine's wonderful piano play backing up Weinstein's imaginative and stylish solo leads on the flute.

Not to be overlooked here is the band and what a band it is. Latin jazz great pianist Mark Levine provides several delicious piano solos. The percussions are adequately taken care of by the tandem of Herrera and Martinez who together provide the backbone of the Latin jazz beat. Bassist Santi Debriano seems to be the glue that holds the group together. As for the leader, well, you got to hear him to believe him. He makes that flute dance, sing and flow gently providing one marvelous performance throughout.

To this listener, the most outstanding piece of music on the disc is Levine's composition "La Coneja Loca," where Weinstein delivers a terrific solo on a very catchy melody that defines his Latin jazz roots. On Bobby Hutcherson's "Gotcha," the leader introduces the tune with a solo shot on bass flute.

The album rounds out with a chart from pianist Mulgrew Miller (Soul-Leo) and ends with a lively rendition of Victor Young's immortal "Stella by Starlight." A terrific album by any standards.

Review by Paul J. Youngman

KJA Advocate for WWW.VINILEMANIA.NET

With all my soul, the poets translation for Con Alma, and the feeling that pervades the new CD by Mark Weinstein. Weinstein has put together a quintet that plays jazz tunes, a few standards, and a few originals with heavy Latin influences. Little known tunes, such as "Gottcha" by Bobby Hutcherson, "Soul-Leo" by Mulgrew Miller, "Crescent" by John Coltrane and "Fee Fi Fo Fum" by Wayne Shorter are all presented with a Latin groove underpinned by exciting Latin percussion, dynamic bass playing and excellent solos by Mark Levine on piano and Mr. Weinstein on flute.

The age of great liner notes has returned two full pages that present a detailed view into the process of composition. Larry Harlow introduces Mark Weinstein as a talented multi-instrumentalist, arranger, composer and educator. Harlow pens a brief description of each song, time signatures, basic song structure, type of flute that Weinstein utilizes during the performance (he uses at least three different flutes, a standard flute, an alto flute and a bass flute), as well as his personal take on the soloing of each member of the quintet.

The title track "Con Alma" by Dizzy Gillespie opens with a piano introduction, joined by drums and flute the song features Mark Weinstein on alto flute, a very refined and composed flute stylist. The song is played in a laid back ballad groove, the bassist Santi Debriano takes the song up a notch with some intense pizzicato playing during his solo.

The recording features three original songs, one written by the bass player Santi Debriano, entitled "Santi's Africaleidescope" a fast paced Afro-Cuban big band number that makes do with a powerful, straight ahead flute solo by Mark Weinstein and some inspired piano playing by Mark Levine, while the rhythm section raises the roof with their ferocious playing.

"Broadway Local" by Mark Weinstein an up-tempo tune that swings in Jazz-Latin form and features a fine piano solo by Mr. Levine. "La Coneja Loca" an original composition by Mark Levine that gives ample opportunity to Mr. Weinstein to breakout and lay down his inspired playing that seems so technically perfect.

The drum solo for the song "Monte Adentro" composed by Orlando Maraca Valle, features drummer Mauricio Herrera that sounds very much in the style of a timbalist, flashy fast fills, augmented by off-beats and down-beat cymbal crashes, supported by heavy handed, melodic piano chords by Levine, that Herrera play off with a fiery Latin spirit.

The final song of the CD, the standard "Stella By Starlight" composed by Victor Young is performed in anything but a standard manner. A standard starting point that rapidly transforms into a high powered opportunity to solo, Mr. Weinstein sets the pace with the first exploration of the melody with-in the melody. Mark Levine takes up the challenge and responds with beautiful melodic playing of his own, single note runs, arpeggios and full sounding expanded chords all set off against the timba rhythm of the bass and drums. The bassist Santi Debriano lays down a col-arco solo of classical proportions that causes a stir with the percussionist's who let loose with a fast paced call and response to end Con Alma in an exiting and highly pleasing manner.

George W. Carroll
The Musicians' Ombudsman
EJAZZ CD Review

An interesting collaboration of mainstream & jazz classics delivered by a master flautist. It's mind boggling to realizethat there are so many consummate musical artists out there. And, I'm sure that for every thousand that performs on the level of a Mark Weinstein, there probably are several thousand more as good or possibly even better. Mark's artistic feeling & delivery style seems to exist for us on an astonishing variety of levels as he interprets his musical choices. His signature tune "Con Alma" seems simple in conception, yet it is sophisticated in it's execution. I can only assume therefore that the universality of what he offers his audience, touches the greatest breadth of his listenership by default.

review by Chip Boaz
Courtesy The Latin Jazz Corner

"Collaboration lies at the heart of any successful performance - a fact all artists must remember when gathering musicians for a recording. The personnel needs to compliment each other artistically while reflecting a variety of musical backgrounds. The repertoire needs to challenge the musicians and at the same time, they must demonstrate mastery over the material. The ensemble should display a mutual respect for their tradition while pushing it in creative directions. Flautist Mark Weinstein balances all these factors on *Con Alma*, bringing together a bi-coastal group of musicians with immense amounts of life, creativity and musicality.

Modern Jazz Repertoire and Latin Rhythms

Weinstein and his group tackle a challenging modern jazz repertoire, adapted into Latin rhythms. The stuttering rhythmic figures of Thelonious Monk's "Evidence" work well over the double time rumba-like feel. Weinstein provides a fiery solo, blazing through the changes against the drummers' manic performance. The classic standard "Stella by Starlight" receives a warm and respectful Salsa interpretation. Weinstein takes an extended solo through familiar territory while Pianist Mark Levine explores new harmonic approaches. Bassist Santi Debriano's bowed solo blends Cachao and Paul Chambers into a mix of rhythmic and melodic invention. Levine explodes into a powerful montuno, opening the door for strong statements by drummer Mauricio Herrera and conguero Pedro Martinez. Wayne Shorter's "Fee-Fi-Fo-Fum" comfortably rides in a funky cross between Danzon and Salsa. Weinstein's solo reflects a combination of bluesy licks and rhythmic ideas while Levine adds contemporary melodic development. Martinez and Herrera energetically trade eight measure phrases before Weinstein improvises into the melody. The group organically combines traditional Latin Jazz with swing on Dizzy Gillespie's "Con Alma." Both Levine and Weinstein utilize these feel changes to create solid statements until Debriano plays a sensitive solo that connects deeply with the song's changes. The musicians demonstrate a deep understanding of modern jazz through their inspired performances.

Band Members As Composers

Several band members contribute original songs to the album. Weinstein's "Broadway Local" combines "Giant Steps" changes with a melodic twist and several new modulations. Levine displays his mastery of these classic changes, melting them into an intriguing statement. Weinstein's breathy tone exposes a flurry of notes, exploring all avenues of the harmony. Levine's "La Coneja Loca" provides a traditional Cha Cha Cha, with a jazz based piano montuno supporting a rhythmic melody. Weinstein immediately attacks the song with intensive rhythmic ideas and quick runs, inspiring a wealth of response from the drummers. Levine takes a more melodic approach, building from a sparse texture into a full mixture of montunos and harmonic ideas. Debriano and Levine open "Santi's Africaleidescope" with a subtle 6/8 groove that quickly segues into a rhythmic melody. Weinstein and Levine both deliver inspiring solos before Debriano works his way into the upper reaches of his bass for a melodic exploration of the song. The artists display a strong musicianship on these songs, both as performers and composers.

Unique Musical Selections

Weinstein also chooses some unique selections that add a different flavor to the album. Mulgrew Miller's "Soul-Leo" provides the perfect setting for a funky Cha Cha Cha groove, balanced with a bit of swing. Levine, Weinstein, and Debriano all thrive on the feel, playing against it with an inspired vigor. Martinez improvises through the reprise of the melody, pushing the song to an exciting ending. Weinstein starts the soulful groove to Bobby

Hutcherson's "Gotcha" on bass flute until the rhythm section adds a funky feel. He continues into a subtle blues flavored solo, enriched by his instrument's rich tone. The percussionists enter a double time feel, providing solo space for Martinez until Weinstein returns to the main groove. The group creates an album highlight with their creative exploration of John Coltrane's "Crescent." A free improvisation moves into a bolero-esque feel, eventually arriving in up-tempo Salsa. Levine plays a particularly inspired solo here, reflecting a study of both McCoy Tyner and Coltrane himself. He moves a variety of sequenced lines through the changes, building a beautiful melodic statement. The band falls back into free improvisation, ending the song with the slower repetition of the melody. These steps outside standard repertoire reveal the group's unique influences and daring nature.

A True Collaboration

Weinstein and his musicians successfully bring together the necessary elements that raise Con Alma into a unified display of personality. Levine's presence brings a West Coast flavor to the recording; the musicians approach the songs with a straight ahead cool that exposes their comfort and control. The repertoire reflects a broad knowledge of jazz - Weinstein and his group cover serious material that lies at the heart of the jazz tradition. At the same time, they establish themselves as composers and active participants in the music's history. The ensemble utilizes ample creativity in their application of Latin rhythms, always with the best taste. From start to finish, the group commits itself to a serious exploration of jazz and Latin music, finding inspiration both in their mission and the high level musicality between them. Resultantly, Weinstein's group displays a powerful musicianship throughout the recording that strikes at the heart of collaboration."

review by Peter Westbrook
Courtesy JazzReview.com

Mark Weinstein is strictly an amateur jazz flutist. This could be taken to mean less than competent, but the word, derived from the French amour, can be translated as "lover of," i.e. someone who does something purely for the love of it. In my book, it is a compliment. (Until 1952, for example, only an amateur could captain the English cricket team!)

Weinstein paid his dues as a professional musician in a previous incarnation--as a trombonist in the 60s and 70s, helping to develop the Latin trombone style, while working with the likes of Chick Corea, Cal Tjader, Eddie Palmieri, Tito Puente, Herbie Mann, Maynard Ferguson, Thad Jones/Mel Lewis, Lionel Hampton and Clark Terry. Subsequently, however, he abandoned the trombone, took up the flute, earned a PhD in Philosophy, and became a professor at Montclair State University.

Since then, Weinstein has, just for the love of it, produced a number of fine recordings, each one notable for its careful selection of sideman and attention to detail in the researching and choice of material. And they run the gamut of genres, Cuban, Brazilian, Jewish... a breadth of styles many record company executives would frown on. But Weinstein markets his own stuff, with Jazzheads Records, and makes his own decisions.

Mark's most recent offering, released September 4th, consists of Latin-oriented treatments of classic jazz standards along with a handfull of originals. He described the background to

the session in an interview with Tomas Peña E jazzNews, who asked him about his concept, and why he chose this particular group of musicians.

"My notoriety in the Latin Jazz community is still based on my 1967 trombone recording, Cuban Roots, and the two sequels on flute, Cuban Roots Revisited (2001) and Algo Mas (2005). It is of an avant-garde player of Afro-Cuban folkloric-based jazz. I had also recorded a number of albums of Brazilian jazz, Tudo de Bom (2003) and O Nosso Amor (2005). I decided to make a mainstream Latin jazz album to broaden the presentation of my music and make it more radio friendly. The key was to hire one of my oldest friends in the business, Mark Levine, to perform and coproduce the album. Mark has very deep roots in Latin Jazz and is a great jazz pianist with nothing to prove. I knew any project that he participated in would be deep and musical. Once Mark agreed, we chose a selection of classic material by Dizzy Gillespie, Thelonious Monk, John Coltrane and Wayne Shorter as the core and then added other material to round out the album."

Suffice to say that everything works beautifully. Mark Levine was an inspired choice--his piano work is the glue that holds the whole sound together, and he solos with authority. Debriano, Herrera and Martinez understand the material and the genre perfectly; they don't put a foot wrong throughout the session. And Weinstein carries the melody lines, and solos, with his own unique voice, moving between C, alto, and bass flutes to add variety to the sound. Above all, the meeting of minds between the two Marks--Weinstein & Levine--has produced a program of both variety and balance. It is great to hear compositions by Gillespie, Monk, Wayne Shorter, Mulgrew Miller and Bobby Hutcherson. The Coltrane piece, "Crescent," even though one of his Impulse! albums is named after it, is one of his lesser known, and it is great to hear it revived; it shares a prayer-like quality with "Lonnie's Lament," recently recorded by Anat Cohen on her Poetica album. Along with these pieces, originals by Weinstein, "Broadway Local," Levine, "La Coneja Loca," and Debriano, "Santi's Africaleidescope," fit happily alongside the jazz classics-- sufficient praise in itself.

As an amateur, Weinstein probably loses money on these projects; I know he is often out-of-pocket after many of his own gigs. But there is no need for him to lose too much, so run out (actually go online) and buy this as soon as possible!

O Nosso Amor

"Mark Weinstein's love affair with Brazilian music is not new. Back in 1998, in his "Jazz World Trios" CD he had already included Brazilian music in his repertoire. He also had special guests such as Romero Lubambo and Cyro Baptista. Deepening that relationship, in 2003 he released the wonderful "Tudo de Bom," featuring thirteen tracks all written by Hermeto Pascoal from his superb "Calendario do Som" project. In that album, the band working with Weinstein was comprised of Richard Boukas (guitar, vocals), Nilson Matta (bass), Paulo Braga (drums) and Vanderlei Pereira (percussion). There is not much to say about Tudo de Bom without using superlatives. The music is excellent, and all performers shine brilliantly.

"Three years later, Weinstein comes back to more Brazilian music in his latest CD "O Nosso Amor." This time, the repertoire is clearly diverse and covers original pieces Weinstein wrote as well as Brazilian gems by Tom Jobim, Ary Barroso, Joao Donato, Pixinguinha and others. The band accompanying Weinstein this time is Paulo Braga (drums), Guilherme Franco

(percussion), Jorge Silva (percussion) and two thirds of Trio da Paz with Romero Lubambo (classical guitar) and Nilson Matta (bass) -- that alone is the icing on the cake. Besides the music and performers, the arrangements featured in "O Nosso Amor" deserve special recognition. Weinstein knows just the right blend when he uses his bass, alto and soprano flutes. It's like having three excellent musicians featured in one album. Ary Barroso's classic opener "Bahia" starts off the selections in "O Nosso Amor." With Lubambo's classy guitar introduction enriched by shakers and whistles, Weinstein lets loose to a good start. This nice piece gets the band warmed up for what is coming up. When Matta opens Donato's well known "Lugar Comum," a soft swinging mood takes over the previous samba beat from the opener. Matta still comes back from for a rich bass solo in the middle of the track. This guy has the touch, no doubt, and to prove his bass can almost speak, Matta's own "Sampa 67" spices things up. The same goes to Lubambo's energized "Frevo Camarada," which is everything its name says: a high-energy frevo.

"Jobim is present in three instances: "Falando de Amor" is performed in choro style, with flute, pandeiro and guitar dominating the track, but yet allowing Matta's bass solo a featured spot in the arrangement; the title track gets a more direct samba approach; and finally, "Por Causa de Voce" shows the romantic side of Jobim. Weinstein's original pieces in the album prove just how much Brazilian blood are running in his veins. "Batucada" is a percussion festival inspiring listeners to get down and samba as if in Rio during Carnival. "Marka Som" is more cadenced and peaceful. Two of the most beautiful moments in the album are from the Pixinguinha repertoire. While "Um a Zero" is jovial and playful, "Naquele Tempo" is pure ecstasy with the richest bass flute sound you'll ever hear. In closing the album, Franco's original "Capoeira" brings back all musicians to one last chance to showcase their talents in a delicious baião. It's a perfect closing."

egidio - musicabrasileira.org

"With O Nosso Amor, flautist Mark Weinstein has put together one of the year's top Latin jazz releases. The recording, which is of superior quality and performance, resonates Weinstein's texture on every track.

"From the opening cut, "Bahia," we are introduced to the pure skills of Weinstein as he weaves in and out of every solo line like the master he is. "Lugar Comum" highlights the extraordinary bass skills of Nilson Matta, who adds his gift to the composition and applies exactly what it needs. Weinstein has always surrounded himself with the best players and this recording is no different. Romero Lubambo on guitar is an absolute delight. His team play with Weinstein exemplifies the excitement and feel of Latin jazz.

"Frevo Camarada," which was written by Lubambo, is a track that you will not get enough of. The title song, cowritten by Anotio Carlos Jobim and Moraes De M.V.Cruz, is a beautiful composition that again highlights Lubambo's phenomenal guitar work. The recording takes off with "Batucada," a big-time samba party that will have you up and about the living room. The closing run of the recording includes some of the finest Latin compositions all around; however, the original work by Weinstein, "Marka Som," demonstrates his superior composition ability.

"This Jazzheads release is outstanding. From the compositions to the quality of recording, O Nosso Amor is on my top CD list for 2006.

Steve Caputo

"There's nothing lovelier than an adept student of Bossa Nova who does justice to the idiom. Mark Weinstein's choice of Romero Lubambo as the guitarist for his sextet was an intelligent choice to exploit and interpret the musical world of 'Tom' Jobim. This is Jobim and Bonfá of old, but with a modern contemporary twist. The group's striking use of imagery in their renditions points to their unusual artistic sensibility and viewpoint about their chosen craft. They certainly have an innate knowledge of the latino culture and their renditions reflect this."

George W. Carroll...The Musicians' Ombudsman, ejazznews.com

"Flautist Mark Weinstein returns with another fine effort, hot on the heels of 2005's critically acclaimed *Algo Mas*. The earlier album was a mix of Cuban roots and modern rock elements, but this new one finds Weinstein swimming in Brazilian waters, with the help of the great guitarist Romero Lubambo.

"From the festive dance of the classic "Bahia," to the serenity of Antonio Carlo Jobim's "O Nosso Amor," the set exudes a relaxed but spirited sound. Weinstein's breathy flute work is like a gentle wind on "Naquele Tempo," and beguils on "Marka Som." As usual he surrounds himself with stellar musicians-percussionists, a tight rhythm section and, of course, Lubambo - who together fill the music with fantastic rhythms and bright solos."

Mark F. Turner...allaboutjazz.com

Mark Weinstein lanca "O Nosso Amor." O CD traz 12 faixas, incluindo choro, samba, bossa nova, frevo, capoeira, jazz e batucada.

"Lancado pela gravadora Jazzheads nos EUA, "O Nosso Amor" combina gloriosamente a musicalidade e a composicao talentosa desse brilhante inovador do jazz. "O Nosso Amor" exhibe a magia de Mark Weinstein juntamente com musicos conceituados como Romero Lubambo na guitarra, Nilson Matta no baixo acustico, Paulo Braga nos tambores, e Guilherme Franco e Jorge Silva na percussao.

"Prometendo ser um dos lancamentos tops de jazz latino neste ano, "O Nosso Amor" e um exemplo extraordinario da interpretacao de Weinstein sobre o estilo afro-latino e afro-cubano. "Mark Weinstein e um inovador em jazz latino por estar entre os primeiros musicos de jazz a gravar com secoes de ritmos cubanos tradicionais. O album "Cuban Roots" (Raizes cubanas), lancado em 1967, e uma obra classica com toques de Mark no trombone e Chick Corea no piano numa epica transformacao do jazz latino.

Brazilianvoice.com

"Mark Weinstein's "O Nosso Amor" a Masterpiece!

"Flute virtuoso, Maestro Mark Weinstein. A world-class musician. A phenomenon!

"Nowadays, few flutists and musicians can match the amazing creative talent of Mark Weinstein. This man is a musical phenomenon. Mesmerizing, authoritative yet, charmingly and tenderly captivating. His recent CD "O Nosso Amor" as expected to be or to appear is no less than a monumental musical accomplishment. It is a masterpiece at so many levels. A pure musical magic. The album contains 12 tracks of an exquisite beauty, delivered with luxurious musical wealth, superb arrangements and utmost musical nostalgia. The highlights of the CD are: Bahia, O Nosso Amor and Sampa 67. The amazing aspect of this CD is not exclusively the authentic delivery of pure Jazzy-Brazilian repertoire, but the unmatched improvisation and musical virtuosity of Mark Weinstein on flute, Nilson Matta on bass, Romero Lubambo on guitar.

"The beauty of the music on the CD metamorphosed through delightful strokes and vibes by Paulo Braga on drums, Guilherme Franco on percussion, and Jorge Silva, also on percussion. "Bahia" one of my favorite tunes of the CD is an all time international favorite of world music lovers. It has been recorded by leading performers like Placido Domingo, the legendary John Coltrane and Carmen Miranda. But Mark Weinstein's recording is quite different. It is more vivacious with its haunting Jazz-swing tempo. It comes to life with burst of joy and enchanting romance. "O Nosso Amor" is a wonderful CD, warm, luxurious, lyrical, rich and infinitely haunting. Grab a copy. It is almost perfect. Rating: 5 stars out of five. A world-class musical quality."

Maximilien de Lafayette, www.worldjewishnewsagency.org

"Mark Weinstein has already proven himself to be a magnificent flutist in the world of Brazilian jazz with two CD's, Jazz World Trios and Tudo de Bom. His latest, O Nosso Amor solidifies his standing, as if it needed any solidifying. Weinstein and his band interpret several Brazilian styles in a program of originals and Latin classics. Weinstein has a wonderful light and gentle musical sensibility that comes through clearly on each track. Whatever the situation and/or style call for Weinstein provides through an assortment of soprano, alto and bass flutes. His band is supportive and exciting. O Nosso Amor is a great CD sure to be loved by all fans of Brazilian jazz.

"Continuing to show the love and affection he has for Antonio Carlos Jobim he showed on his previous releases, Weinstein includes three tunes by the classic Brazilian composer. The title track, from the Black Orpheus soundtrack, is in a relaxed medium tempo, with a beautiful unison melody by Weinstein and guitarist Romero Lubambo. Por Cause de Voce is a samba (or more precisely - as the liner notes point out - a samba cancao), which Weinstein plays on alto flute. This intoxicating instrument works well on the gentle ballad. The final Jobim tune is "Falando de Amor," another ballad-ish song identified as a "chora-cancao." "Lugar Comun" a bossa-esque ballad was written by two other classic Brazilian composers, Joao Donato and Joao Gilberto.

"The liner notes of O Nosso Amor serve as a mini-history of Brazilian improvised music. For instance, they point out that "Afredo da Rocha Vianna Jr., "pixinguinha"...continues to be regarded as the greatest choro composer and flutist of all time. Two of the Latin masters choros are included. "Um a Zero," an up-tempo flute feature, was composed in honor of

Brazil's winning its first international soccer title in 1919," "Naquele Tempo is a slow and easy ballad which Weinstein performs wonderfully on bass flute. "Bahia," the energetic opening samba, was written by Ary Barroso, another classic Brazilian composer.

"The band members also contribute several original tunes. Weinstein himself wrote "Marka Som," a slow to medium bossa nova. In a jazz samba style is "Sampa 67," written by bassist Nilson Matta. The tune is energetic and has a syncopated melody. Percussionists Guilhermme Franco and Jorge Silva contribute an improvised percussion feature, "Batucada." "Frevo Camarada" is an energetic up-tempo march written by guitarist Romero Lubambo. Finally, from Guilherme Franco comes "Capoeira," "inspired by the rhythm of the Bahian berimbau."

"O Nosso Amor is a wonderful collection of Brazilian tunes, old and new. The band is traditional yet hip. They support Weinstein in his masterful flute playing with tasty accompaniments. They also have something to say individually: all as improvisers and several as composers. Weinstein has presented a program that is a balanced as it is diverse. He is clearly one of the greatest Brazilian flutists recording today."

David Miele, Jazz Improv

"I first heard Mark Weinstein play with Cal Tjader and Eddie Palmieri on the 1966 recording El Sonido Nuevo. That recording represented the hotter side of his music. This CD, O Nosso Amor, includes- almost exclusively- the sweeter side of his music. The twelve selections on this CD include three compositions by Antonio Carlos Jobim, three by highly respected writers of the past, one by Donato/Gilberto/Gil, and five by members of the ensemble. The recoding quality is excellent, and I want to make special note that they achieved a "Goldilocks" use of percussion: not too little, not too much, just right.

"Classical guitarist Lubambo is outstanding throughout the CD. He is a strong and capable musician who demonstrates the influence of Charlie Byrd and for a few moments, Baden Powell. The great Ary Baroso's lovely

"Bahia" is the lead off selection of the CD. It is the closing piece on the 1961 Getz-Byrd Jazz Samba. The two versions are very different, but Lubambo is the glue that provides some relationship between the two versions. This version is much looser than that earlier one. The earlier one had two bass players, which provided a gravity that this one does not have or need or want. It is free and happy. The guitarist's ability in single string and chordal soloing is very audible on this track. Weinstein demonstrates beautiful use of the lower register of his instrument on the middle section of the song. The other composer of the past, Alfredo deRocha Vianna Jr., "Pixinguinha" is represented by "Naquele Tempo", and "Um a Zero", two of the most compact pieces. The former is especially noteworthy for Weinstein's use of the bass flute, which I haven't heard used to any great extents since Paul Horn's performances of the early 1960's. The moderate tempo is for all intents and purposes a duet between flute and guitar. The later piece is up-tempo with great use of modulation.

"The five selections composed by the members of the group have great variety. The brief "Batucada" is a samba percussion parade. Bassist-co-producer Matta's contribution, "Sampa. 67", is an up-tempo piece with a great flute-guitar- bass-unison sections and ascending,

although minimal, harmonies. The beautiful guitar interlude once again shows Lubambo's excellent single string and chordal styles. Lubambo's Frevo Camarada' is up tempo as well, demonstrating a Byrd-like include, with a few flashes of Baden Powell. There is a great percussion display with the section using different instruments. Leader Weinstein's "Marka Som" is a positive and optimistic melody played by the flute, bass and guitar. There is a lovely descending chord figure played on the guitar immediately before the flute starts the final melody. Percussionist Franco's "Capoeira" closes the CD and is unquestionably the freest in form. There is one chord used, and the soloists are almost 'avant garde' on the selection. The bowed bass solo is reminiscent of Paul Chambers' great work.

"Lugar Comum" by Joao Donato, Joao Gilberto and Gilberto Gil features the leader on alto flute. There is wonderful interplay between the bass and guitar. The guitar accompaniment is superb and more readily appreciated in this piece. Finally congratulations to Weinstein for choosing three of Antonio Carlos Jobim's lesser-known pieces. "O Nosso Amor" (by Jobim and Moraes) is one of the earlier of Jobim's pieces to reach public acclaim as it was part of the score of Black Orpheus. The use of percussion and bass solo is especially noteworthy. "Falando de Amor" is moderately slow in a minor key. Matta's bass solo, which takes place early in the piece, is outstanding both technically and emotionally. "Por Causa de Voce" (by Jobim and Duran) is a lovely ballad. I hear no use of percussion on this piece.

"The musical form explored on the CD has proved itself highly enduring after close to a half century. May it long endure, and may we hear much more from Weinstein and his associates."

Marshall Zucker, Jazz Improv

Algo Mas

JAZZIZ Magazine 'Critic's Picks'
"BEST OF THE YEAR" Algo Mas

"Algo Mas is anything but the typical modern jazz CD. Though there is a spirit of open improvisation and the musical influences are varied and eclectic, those two features are about all Mark Weinstein's latest release has in common with many of the other CD's reviewed in these pages. That, however, is not to say that Algo Mas is lacking in originality or interesting ideas. Rather, there is so much to hear on this release that it will certainly take a few listens to get it all in. Weinstein calls his band Cuban Roots, and it is a most appropriate name. For its textural canvas, this recording chooses African influences in the most folkloric interpretations- the roots of Afro-Cuban music."

"The CD consists largely of original arrangements of traditional Afro-Cuban folkloric themes. "Ellegua Abierto" begins with a solo guitar, gradually adding vocals, percussion and flute. The flute melodies are interwoven throughout the track. The musical image of two instrument co-existing and "bumping into" each other is one that is used to great effect throughout the CD. The idea is used again on the next tune "Mis Consuelos," this time the combination is flute and guitar. The traditional theme this piece is based on recurs throughout the tune, mostly as a background part to the soloing. "Aguas de Ochun" set in a busy 6/8 meter, featuring sparse vocal lines, which are answered by Weinstein's flute, before

building in intensity for a loud jabbing guitar solos. The most mainstream sounding tune has to be "Mamita Baila" with a singable pop-sounding melody."

"Vocals and the flute are again "in each other's faces" for the 6/8 tune "Vientos de Oya" which also features guitar and bass solos. "Jete Dlo" is a guitar/percussion duet. "Caminando con Agayu" again employs the call and answer idea, with flute and guitar trading answers to vocal calls. "Fantasia Malaga" is one of the most dense tunes, with its collective soloing and busy percussion. Weinstein takes one of his most interesting solos on "Salud Asojano" which begins with a cappella vocals. The title track, which closes the disc, is up-tempo and high intensity."

"If you are looking for traditional jazz, this isn't the CD. Ditto if you want the kind of Latin jazz made famous by masters like Tito Puente and Mongo Santamaria. If, however, you are interested in jazz at its most primal level improvisation for creativity's sake- then Algo Mas is for you. Weinstein is a fine player and leader and his band presents the unusual material in a consistent and informed manner. If this sounds remotely interesting to you, you'll love the CD. For, while some may not care for the concept, there's no doubt that its presentation is top-notch."

David Miele - Jazz Improv

"Mark Weinstein isn't likely to be the first name on anyone's list of Latin jazz legends. Still, his 1967 album Cuban Roots did much to reunite Latin jazz with the deep, unfiltered Afro-Cuban drum rhythms that gave rise to it two decades earlier. At the time, Weinstein was a trombonist and composer with an adventurous creative streak."

"By the mid-'70s he'd forsaken the trombone for the flute, though his pursuits for the next 20 years or so were more academic than musical. Today he's a university professor who, lucky for us, still finds time to make music. And what stunning, spine-tingling music it is. Algo Mas (Something More) features Weinstein on soprano, alto and bass flutes, joined by percussionist/vocalist Pedro Martinez, electric guitarist Jean-Paul Bourelly, acoustic bassist Santi Debriano and percussionists Nani Santiago, Gene Golden and Skip Burney for an hour of exhilarating, mesmerizing sounds that are part Latin jam, part praise session for the African deities who figure prominently in much Afro-Latin traditional music and part musical conversation in which the players speak the same language with flawless fluency."

"Weinstein Digs Ever Deeper The guitar has never been a staple instrument in Latin jazz, but it's the first sound heard here. Bourelly begins "Ellegua Abierto" (an ode to the Yoruba god of the crossroads) with wispy, almost offhanded soloing. Out of nowhere, Martinez breaks in with a vocal chant and it's pure magic from there to the end of the disc."

"The percussionists create a wall of intricate, shifting beats, a perfect atmosphere in which the guitar, bass, flutes and vocals feed into and off of one another, sometimes all together but frequently in solo sections that allow for some amazingly symbiotic excursions of sound. It's difficult to describe the sort of euphoria this album brings about. It soothes and caresses but cooks as well. And in a way it takes Latin jazz to where it's always been and to where it's never been, combining timeless rhythms and extemporaneous spirit like nothing else. Absolutely indispensable for Latin jazz aficionados, very highly recommended for all others."

Torr for World Music Central

"Thirty-eight years ago a trombonist with the unlikely name (for a Latin jazz musician) of Mark Weinstein released one of the most innovative albums in Latin Jazz ever heard then, Cuban Roots. If you're fortunate enough to snag a copy, you may quickly discover that it sounds as fresh now as it did then.

"Now picture Weinstein in 2005, older and musically even more sophisticated, playing flute rather than trombone. And rather than playing in a typical brass-heavy Latin jazz band, he surrounds himself with a highly eccentric jazzrock guitarist, a vocalist who sweetly sings Santeria chants, a Latin jazz acoustic bass player, and a battery of Cuban drummers. This adds up to one of the most original blends of jazz and Cuban music heard in recent years, quirky, lively and as singular as Weinstein's 1967 masterpiece.

"The 10 tunes comprising Algo Mas include a variety of improvisations grounded in rumba and Santeria songs. Two instrumental voices are dominant throughout. Weinstein forcefully and lyrically plays soprano, alto and bass flutes, some times overdubbing all three to create a massive, intense vocalized sound. Electric and electrifying guitarist Jean Paul Bourelly skitters about the frets with lots of Afro-pop, jazz and avant-rock colors, and with more than a touch of the runs you might identify with Jimi Hendrix. This adds an odd but appealing edginess to the music, as if you expect the band to veer into an Afro-Cuban version of "Foxy Lady" at any second. Just to make this musical gumbo a little more odd, there's vocalist Pedro Martinez, who sings Santeria chants with great fervor and traditional styling, seemingly oblivious to Bourelly's noisy neo-psychedelic runs and Weinstein's post-bop flute flights.

"This is intellectually deep and emotionally satisfying jazz improvisation on Cuban themes that demands and rewards close listening, a recording for those who want to adventure beyond much of the formulaic arrangements that pass as 'Latin jazz' today. And you can dance to it, although you'll have to create some strikingly new moves to keep up with this music's daring spirit."

Norman Weinstein, THE BEAT

"Retro Latin Jazz with the blessings of the deities of Mother Africa barley begins to describe this latest outing from veteran multi-instrumentalist Mark Weinstein. Like a lost chapter from the historical sixties concert in Woodstock, New York, Weinstein and the cast of his band Cuban Roots unveil a hypnotic session of rhythms and seductive melodies fresh to our senses yet reminiscent of a perhaps forgotten street corner rumba from a previous life. Weinstein, who spent most of the sixties blowing his trombone with living legends such as Herbie Mann and Eddie Palmieri, among many others, started playing the flute in the mid seventies after having retired from playing music in the early 1970's. In 1997, he returned to the stages of the world, this time holding a flute in each hand and continuing his 35-year music career, which still contains uncharted sonic domains within his musical fusion. Playing the soprano, alto and bass flutes, Weinstein paints soundscapes that come to life via the percussive power and dexterity of percussionists Pedrito Martinez, Nani Santiago, Gene Golden and Skip "Brinquito" Burney. The other voices in the band are those of Martinez

interpreting all the Yoruba chants and choruses, and the screaming guitar of Jean-Paul Bourelly (a collaborator of Elvin Jones). His unique sound reaches from Hendrix to Wes Montgomery to free jazz and to the John McLaughlin Mahavishn days. Anchoring the rhythm section is bassist Santi DeBriano with an incredible gusto. Together, these cats make truly cosmic traveling music with a natural down-to-earth feeling. Standouts include Mis Consuelos, Mamita Baila, and title track Algo Mas."

Latin Beat Magazine

"This unique recording has an uplifting spirit that blends traditional Afro-Cuban clave rhythms and vocals with elements of jazz, rock, contemporary dance, and world music. Not to sound overly descriptive, but this music is thick with Old and New World persona; to those familiar with New York-based flautist Mark Weinstein, this should come as no surprise. His impressive resume is dotted with names like Thad Jones, Eddie Palmieri, and Tito Puente, as well as many recent recordings and the landmark 1967 Cuban Roots. After these many years Weinstein is still tapping into the flow of creativity, as vibrantly as ever on Algo Mas (Something More).

"The music's richness and diversity is elevated by Weinstein and the perfect ensemble of musicians. The leader's voice is fertile with jazz roots as he commands and delivers smooth notes using a variety of harmonics from his set of soprano, alto, and bass flutes. Given life by the pulse of a dynamic multi-rhythm section including bassist Santi DeBriano and three percussionists (Gene Golden, Nani Santiago, and "Bringuito" Burney), the music beckons the listener to get up and dance.

"The flute and percussion alone could carry the recording but two additional factors that increase the depth are vocalist/master percussionist Pedro "Pedrito" Martinez and guitarist Jean-Paul Bourelly. Martinez (who won First Place in the Thelonious Monk Institute's Afro/Latin Jazz Hand Drum competition) also colors the music with authentic and soulful vocals. Noted guitarist Bourelly brings a variety textures from Hendrixian rock electricity to native riffs and jazz improvisations on various selections.

"And this is not your typical Latin or Cuban jazz recording, as it borrows heavily from traditional street and spiritual influences, beginning with "Ellegua Abierto (Open Ellegua)," which is layered with mellow guitar, voice chants, percussion, and flute solos. The music exudes a feeling of joy and optimism on "Aguas de Ochun (Ochun's Waters)" with a tempo ported by soothing flute, percussion, and engaging vocals.

"There is so much to enjoy on this recording. Noteworthy pieces include the spellbinding dance of "Vientos de Oya (Winds of Oya)," the percussion/guitar outpouring of "Jete Dlo (First Water)," the calming "Salud Asojano (Health Asojano)," and the closing title song, which highlights free solos from Weinstein and Bourelly, making Algo Mas one of this year's most memorable releases."

Mark F. Turner, allaboutjazz.com

"Might I say right away that this CD project by reedman Mark Weinstein is an interlude in some of the most exquisite latin music I've heard in quite awhile. Mark's very "personal" playing style disguises his profound musical craftsmanship, as he renders his solos with incisive inventive interpretations. Weinstein's passionate improvisations are crisply articulated, often harmonically rich...Yet, subtle in their power. This is a pleasing contrast to some of the more "fusion" oriented projects that mask their soloists with more of a rock based character. That is not jazz. This project is jazz."

George W. Carroll, EJazzNews.com

Tudo de Bom

Viva Bossa!

"Some forty-odd years after Charlie Byrd first brought the then new Bossa Nova to the attention of the jazz world and started the Bossa Nova and "Cool Jazz" craze, and nearly a decade after the death of Antonio Carlos Jobim, the "father" of Bossa (more accurately, one of its fathers), Mark Weinstein, himself one of the great legends of Afro- Latin and Afro-Cuban jazz, comes along with an album that's as fresh and refreshing as anything that came out of that first wave of Bossa. "Tudo de Bom - Music from Hermeto Pascoal's 'Calendario do Som'" celebrates, as the sub-title of this album indicates, the genius and music of Brazilian multi-instrumentalist and composer Hermeto Pascoal, in the form of a selection of tunes from his "Calendario do Som" written from 1996 to 1997. Mark Weinstein's "Tudo de Bom" was released on LKC Productions / String Jazz Records on 18th November 2003.

"Much has happened in Brazilian music and Brazilian jazz in the last four or so decades, but Bossa has never really been out of the scene and continued to evolve. It is therefore most gratifying indeed to have this collection of modern compositions, both of Bossa and other styles, by a giant such as Pascoal, arranged so skilfully by Richard Boukas and interpreted brilliantly by flutist Mark Weinstein and Boukas and the rest of the ensemble. Weinstein of course is forever engraved in the memory of any true Afro-Cuban/Afro-Latin jazz aficionado on account of his revelatory "Cuban Roots" album of 1967, one of the most seminal and influential albums of the genre, and its equally phenomenal 1996 re-working as "Cuban Roots Revisited" - Mark Weinstein having switched from trombone to flute in the intervening years, somewhere around 1973. He is equally well remembered as one of the pioneers of the trombone in Afro-Latin jazz and the foundation of Eddie Palmieri's trombone section, long before "Cuban Roots". "Tudo de Bom" is Mark Weinstein's latest album. Playing flute and alto flute here, Weinstein clearly is still at the very height of his powers, his flowing improvs are a sheer joy of imagination and invention, his voice and technique peerless now. With "Tudo de Bom", Weinstein amply demonstrates that there's still plenty of life and mileage in Bossa and related styles, and that "Cool" can still be real cool. Weinstein's flute is as cool and refreshing as a summer breeze.

"Right from the opening "Song #81, Bossa Nova", Mark Weinstein's "Tudo de Bom" grips you and never lets go. Throughout, Richard Boukas' contributions particularly on guitars and vocals are also outstanding, as is the work of the rest of the ensemble. You get a great sense of the fun everybody must have had in making this album. Two of the thirteen pieces are Bossa Novas, the rest Choros, Valsas, Baiaos and a Samba (adapted from a Valsa original) and Maxixa. Two of the Valsas are combined with a Guarania and Marcho Rancho,

respectively. It would be pointless to go into each piece individually, they are all consistently strong and equally exquisite. The titles consist of simply a song number and the name of the style of the piece, arising out of the nature of Pascoal's "Calendario do Som", which consists of one brief composition written each day over the course of an entire year in celebration of his sixtieth birthday. The thirteen pieces selected here well represent the vast diversity and harmonic and melodic inventiveness of Brazil's leading contemporary composer. Each piece is like a delicate, intricate little vignette, revealing fleeting glimpses, the compositions and arrangements as fluid as Weinstein's improvs, dancing lightly through the air, as an ethereal wisp of cloud, relaxed, laid-back and joyous, rich and vibrant.

"Essential in any serious Brazilian or Afro-Latin Jazz collection, as well as of course any general Bossa collection, Mark Weinstein's "Tudo de Bom" is indeed a worthy tribute to Hermeto Pascoal and indeed to Brazilian music which it represents at its very finest."

-- Renaissance Man, Rainlore

Shifra Tanz

"Mark Weinstein was in the 1960s better known as a trombonist when he played w/ Herbie Mann and various Latin- Jazz ensembles before leaving the music for academia. Now he's back, embracing both the flute and his trad Jewish roots with Shifra Tanz - Jewish Jazz Ensemble, a quartet that interprets Jewish/Hebraic folk tunes in a jazz style that maintains strong folk overtones and even hints of classical (baroque) music.

For the uninitiated to such kindly culture-clashes (see also: Andy Statman, John Zorn, The Klezmatics), there's plenty of haunting, minor-key melodies that sound vaguely Middle Eastern and/or Balkan, but the rhythms and solos are fluid post-bop jazz, ranging from the pensive (Kandel's "Hora/Der Gasn Ningun") to the sorrowful (the J.S. Bach-inflected, "Scarborough Fair" - like "Rosh Hoshana Nigunim") to the somewhat uptempo (the Coltrane-meets- Paul Winter-meets Greek wedding band "Frailach No.4/Bulgar").

Weinstein has a clean, welcoming tone on the flute, Brad S has a Jim Hall-with-teeth approach to the guitar, and Richmond and Haddad provide plenty of tense, subtly volatile rhythmic snap.

Another selling point is all 13 tunes have any appealing compactness to them - everyone says what they need to say then moves on, w/out any extraneous blather. In fact, Shifra Tanz would make for a nice introduction not only to "ethnic" jazz but to jazz neophytes in general - take heed, you gift-givers."

Mark Keresman, jazzreview.com

Originally released on 20th October, 2002, Mark Weinstein's "Shifra Tanz" with his Jewish Jazz Ensemble is much more than the usual exploration of their musical roots that many musicians often embark upon. Listening to this album you very quickly come to realize that "Shifra Tanz" is Mark Weinstein's heart. It is utterly obvious that he is on very intimate terms with traditional Jewish music, there is no need for tentative explorations. Rather, "Shifra Tanz" makes the simple statement, "this is where I come from" and pays a loving homage to the music. Weinstein, of course, is a jazzman, and a legend at that, particularly in

the Afro-Latin/Afro-Cuban jazz sphere. It is therefore completely natural that his homage to the music of his heritage should be entirely in a jazz context.

Taking traditional Jewish material, from the Ashkenazi klezmer, Yiddish song, Yiddish theatre song, and Chassidic nigunim (wordless songs) traditions as well as from the Sephardi tradition of Ladino (Judeo-Spanish) song, Mark Weinstein extends this material structurally as well as harmonically in stunning arrangements and breathtakingly inventive improvs. But his greatest achievement is that at the same time, he perfectly preserves the essence of the material, and therein lies Weinstein's true genius. The Jewish "soul" of this music tugs and pulls at your heartstrings, and Mark Weinstein and his co-conspirators' supremely finely-judged virtuoso performances are deeply moving and touching. Make no mistake though, this is jazz with Jewish soul, but it is jazz through and through, world jazz of the very highest calibre.

Not that you would expect anything less from a world class line-up such as Mark Weinstein's Jewish Jazz Ensemble. Weinstein himself, well remembered as practically the father of Latin jazz trombone and revered for his 1967 cult-status album "Cuban Roots" that for the first time unleashed the rhythms of Cuban folk and particularly Santeria drumming into a wider musical world, since switching to flute around 1973 has attained an almost unrivalled breadth as a player. Spanning Afro-Latin/Afro-Cuban and Brazilian jazz to post-bop and beyond, Mark Weinstein is left virtually peerless as a jazz flutist since the sad passing of Herbie Mann last year, with whom he also worked in the past. Weinstein is joined on "Shifra Tanzt" by guitarist Brad Shepik, best known for his work with Paul Motian and Simon Shaheen, bassist Mike Richmond who, among others, has worked with Stan Getz and Miles Davis, and percussionist Jamey Haddad, best known for his work with Joe Lovano and Dave Liebman, as well as as a member of Simon Shaheen's Qantara ensemble.

Opening with a medley of "Frailach No.4/Bulgar", Mark Weinstein's "Shifra Tanzt" kicks off on a jolly and animated note, with some extremely fine dialogue between flute and guitar improvs. (Freilach and Bulgar are lively Jewish dance forms from Eastern Europe.) "Russian Sher" - another dance form, like much of klezmer music - stays with the light-hearted, happy mood, Weinstein's flute chirping along cheerfully. Two segued Ladino songs make up the next track, "Cuando El Rey Nimrod/La Comida de la Manana", the mood largely celebratory. Jamey Haddad's superbly judged restrained percussion work here lends this piece an extra lift. "Mayn Shtetele Belz/Glick" are two songs from the Yiddish theatre of New York of the first half of the twentieth century. Here, the mood turns nostalgic, with Weinstein's low register flute especially filled with feelings of longing, even languor - the Yiddish word "benkshaft" comes to mind -, while Mike Richmond's bass and Brad Shepik's guitar seem to warmly recall memories of the past. Chassidic nigunim or wordless songs associated with the Rosh Hashanah holy day are the inspiration of "Rosh Hoshana Nigunim". Mark Weinstein's flute here turns reflective, meditative, even devotional, and one can't help being reminded of the spirit of the high holy days prayers. However, the mood turns happier again with "Odessa Bulgarish/Varshaver Freylechs". The Warshawsky Yiddish song "Oifen Pripitchik" contrasts with a more reflective, almost melancholy mood. "Mark's Doina" - a "doina", originally a Rumanian shepherd's lament, is an improvisation that became popular with Eastern European Jewish musicians around the late nineteenth century and replaced the Turkish taksim improvisation - is playful, sometimes teasing, impish, sometimes boisterous, its flights of fancy a delight and full of charm. Another medley of two Ladino songs, "La Rosa/El Novio", follows. The first of these two songs, "La Rosa

Enflorese" to give it its full title, is a perennial favourite, traditionally associated with the Sabbath eve. Mark Weinstein's is one the two most outstanding arrangements of this that it's ever been my pleasure to hear. Hauntingly beautiful and full of charm and elegance, Weinstein's magic flute elevates this piece to yet another level, with Shepik's outstanding guitar becoming incredibly oud-like, and the segued "El Novio" blends in perfectly.

"Kandel's Hora/Der Gasn Nigun" returns to klezmer inspirations with fine extended improvs. The Yablokoff penned Yiddish song "Papirossen" (Cigarettes) opens with Richmond's brilliantly subdued bowed bass setting the poignant mood, which is then picked up and expanded by Shepik and Weinstein. "Hallel Nigunim" once more turns to Chassidic nigunim for inspiration and a quietly reflective mood. Mark Weinstein's "Shifra Tanz" closes with two segued pieces by the American klezmer clarinet legend Dave Tarras, "Shifra Tanz/Kiever Sher".

Exuberance here takes over, and you really don't want Weinstein's brilliantly inventive improvs to stop.

There's only one, albeit inadequate, word to sum up the elegance, charm, sophistication and sheer brilliance and consistency of this album. Magic. More than essential in any contemporary or world jazz collection, as well as of course any good Jewish music collection, Mark Weinstein's "Shifra Tanz" is simply phenomenal. A spine-tingler of an album!

-- Renaissance Man, Rainlore

Three Deuces: Jazz Duets for Flute and Guitars

"Mark Weinstein is one of the most versatile jazz flute performers around today, and he creates some of the best flute jazz in contemporary jazz. Three Deuces contains 13 eclectic jazz compositions sure to attract a large jazz audience. Many of these fine jazz songs are by Mark Weinstein, and he also adds the classics such as "Sweet Lorraine," "Stompin' At The Savoy," and "It Never Entered My Mind." This collection is flawless and full of imaginative performances and intricate music. This CD is for anybody who enjoys good music. Excellent."

Lee Prosser, jazzreview.com

Cuban Roots Revisited

"If Cuban Roots Revisited were simply a tip of the hat to an influential Afro-Cuban recording of 30 years ago, it still would be worth the time and effort. The original Cuban Roots album, released in 1968, was enormously influential (and currently impossible to find, as only 500 copies were pressed) because of its mix of Afro-Cuban religious music, harmonically advanced arrangements, and lengthy improvised solos. The new Cuban Roots Revisited was intended to be a modern recording of that classic album, using some of today's top Latin-jazz musicians after Cubop couldn't secure the rights to re-release the original on CD. But Cuban Roots Revisited is that and a whole lot more.

"It is perhaps not surprising that an album featuring the likes of percussionists Francisco Aguabella, John Santos, Humberto "Negue" Hernandez, and pianist Omar Sosa would be this inspired, but the fact that the performers elevate the material beyond a mere tribute to...

"Mirala Que Linda Viene" nods to Brazil with its sambaesque rhythms and a melody that playfully echoes Antonio Carlos Jobim's "One Note Samba." "Changó" bursts at the seams with energy as the percussion-fueled tribute to the Santería god of thunder and lightning pushes Weinstein's flute and Arturo Velasco's trombone solos into the stratosphere; and the closing percussion-only take on "Eleggua" ends the album as beautifully as it began. It might be stretching it to say that in 30 years Latin-jazz artists will gather to record a tribute to an obscure-but-influential recording that came out back in the summer of '99. It's not a stretch, though, to say that this Cuban Roots deserves as much respect and awe as the original, and if those Latin-jazz players of 2029 want to say the same about their own tribute, they'll have their work cut out for them."

Ezra Gale, picadillo.com

"Perhaps considered an unlikely historical music landmark in the evolution of Afro-Cuban Jazz, in late 1967 a recording session would take place in New York City organized by then trombonist Mark Weinstein entitled Cuban Roots that would mark the pulse and profoundly capture the essence of Afro-Cuban Jazz innovation as never done before. This recording remained obscure and only known as the "Green Album" among an underground base of musicians and hardcore music fans. Now, over 30 years later, Weinstein is commissioned by the San Francisco based label Cubop to record a second version of the latter recording this time entitled Cuban Roots Revisited.

"As with the first rendition, "Cuban Roots Revisited" is described as Afro-Cuban sacred music presented instrumentally and influence by Jazz. Except for Mark who is now heard performing on flute, all of the musicians are California-based. The musical atmosphere is quite inventive as the instrument attempt to revive the secular spiritual voices inherent in Afro-Cuban religion. The 9 tracks feature a variety of rhythms ranging from Guaguanco, Conga, Rumba and Comparsa. Like the tipico call-n-respond Misa Negra choir of Santeria chant rituals, the trombones play in harmony percolating amid the powerful rhythm. Weinstein's flute provides the lone voice knitting an illusive thread of melody that intertwines with harmonious passion.

"Mark's resiliency and virility is apparent throughout as if possessed by Changò, oricha of thunder and lightning. Nonetheless, he manages to illustrate a profound sense of creativity. "Cuban Roots Revisited" conveys a unanimous force of rhythm thereby producing exquisite spiritual enlightenment. Surely, an essential CD to own."

John Davis, LatinJazzClub.com

Jazz World Trios

"Jazz World Trios crosses the lines and beautifully blends the sounds of world music with Cuban jazz, Brazilian jazz, Latin jazz, American blues, African jazz, and contemporary American jazz. It is a most unusual and exciting collection of 6 original songs with each having a long, innovative play time. The song, "Baiao Granfino" is a great work in harmony and imagery. Each song is unique, and each song is different. Weinstein, Bourell, Cardona,

Lubambo, Baptista, Debriano, and Blackman each contribute to joint sharing of musical compositions, and each contributes some outstanding jazz motifs.

"This CD showcases the great flute talent of Mark Weinstein and is sure to please jazz flute listeners. Mark Weinstein is always a treat to listen to, and in this world music collection, he is in top form. Every musician on this CD performs well, and with style, feeling, and imagination. A highly innovative collection, this CD will attract many new listeners to the sound of Mark Weinstein. In a very special way, Jazz World Trios is a classic of contemporary jazz, and a must-have for the jazz listeners' library. A top-notch recording with something for everybody. Five stars."

Lee Proesser, jazzreview.com

"In the opener, "Eleggua," Weinstein plays as though traveling through a wilderness, accompanied by two observant journey mates. Jean-Paul Bourelly's guitar lays a serene melody over Milton Cardona's walking percussion. It is a cross between a hypnotic safari sound and soft folk rock. This track and "Babalu Aye" utilize various rhythm techniques that were used in worship and calling the two named orishas to solicit safe travels and healing. Weinstein travels to Northern Brazil for the Luis Gonzaga composition, "Baiao Granfino." Romero Lubambo joins him on classical guitar along with Cyro Baptista's Brazilian percussion. The tempos change from mild to lively back to mellow again. Lubambo performs a stunning solo just short of the close. Santi Debriano exemplary string bass opens the quiet "LKC Blues" with great style for Weinstein to tell his story. Don't expect big-city grandeur; the rural influence shapes this track.

"Cindy Blackman expertly handles rum duty and one would expect no less from her immense talent. Perhaps this is intellectual blues as it prompts one to think rather than lament. This trio also performs the last track, "Pero Como El Amor," which is probably the most hypnotic and thoughtful of the entire disc. Lubambo's guitar solo sends a romantic touch throughout the lovely bossa nova, "Nos E O Mar," composed by Roberto Menescal and Ronaldo Boscoli. Baptista gently supports his band mates but builds a stronger more pronounced rhythm right before the track's close. Weinstein beautifully interprets this musical form quite differently from most, utilizing the gentler side. These lengthy tracks exhibit versatility from Mark Weinstein and the other musicians. Consistent is the quiet depth in each composition, which is rewarding to listeners who focus on what they hear."

Denai Burbank, jazzreview.com

"Weinstein has come up with a very interesting concept. Using the talents of six international musicians, he formed three trios to represent compositions depicting the African influence on the USA, the Caribbean, and Brazil. This mix results in an intriguing display of rhythmic music that has infused in to it all of the concepts of Jazz along with the territorial elements of the respective geographic areas. As a flutist Weinstein typically soars over the rhythms of the trio members. Two of his trios use guitar and percussion, while the third uses bass and percussion to propel the infectious selections with highly spirited music. The opening "Eleggua" features Bourelly on twelve-string guitar, while Cardona plays Cuban percussion. This selection concentrates on the Cuban sub region of the Caribbean and the

influence African music had on it. The other selection by this trio, "Babula Aye," reflects the Haitian side of the equation. Africa not only influenced the music of these islands, it had an indelible impact on the religion of the people that not coincidentally show up in the music. Two distinct areas of Brazil are presented featuring Lubambo on classical guitar and Baptista on Brazilian percussion. They present the Northeast area's music on "Baiao Granfino" and the sounds of Rio on "Nos e o Mar." Given the enormous size of Brazil, it is no surprise to find musical and well as cultural differences. The beat of the Northeast is quite different from the Cariocan samba, and Weinstein's has captured the distinction quite well. Rio's music has more love built into the songs, while you can hear in the music of the outer regions more of an attempt to cast off the day to day problems that weigh on the people. The USA influenced part of the set features bassist Debriano and drummer Blackman. Their program reflects both the rural side of the the equation, represented here by the blues, and the urban side, with its recognizable big city associations. Weinstein, adaptability on these varying styles is impressive. He jumps right in the blues with assuredness that is driven by the excellent rhythms put down by the other two. The urban tune "Pero Como El Amor" displays great bass/drum interplay with Weinstein' melodic yet penetrating flute tunes.

"Conceptually and musically this is a very successful project. Weinstein has taken a point and proven it conclusively in a way that is most enjoyable to hear. I was very impressed with this recording's execution, originality and spirit.

Seasoning

"There is a warmth to Mark Weinstein's tone and a lyrical phrasing that is most pleasing to the ear. In the CD's liner notes it is stated that Weinstein's goal was to play jazz flute with the fluency and breadth of a saxophone. In that case, the names Stan Getz, Paul Desmond and Gerry Mulligan come to mind.

"Weinstein is accompanied by some very capable and competent sideman. Cecil Brooks III is the drummer throughout the record and percussionist Bryan Carrot is featured on vibes or marimba on several tracks. The bass chair is shared by Dwayne Dolphin and Chris White and the guitar duties are alternated between Rob Reich and the well known Vic Juris. Everyone works cohesively as a unit complimenting Weinstein's flute beautifully.

"What I really enjoyed about this disc, besides the gorgeous music, is how easily and effortlessly listenable it is from beginning to end. The disc contains twelve tracks just are there are twelve months in the year and attempts through music to audibly describe and illustrate the connection of the four seasons. Thus the disc's title "Seasoning." It begins with Weinstein's original "Winter Song" which is followed nine songs later by "Fall Guy" also by Weinstein. In between these two, you will hear the Rogers and Hammerstein standard "It Might As Well Be Spring" and the George Gershwin masterpiece "Summertime." Other classic compositions on the disc include Cole Porter's "Night and Day," Jerome Kern's "Yesterdays" and "You Stepped Out Of A Dream," written by Gus Kahn and Nacio Herb Brown. Tunes by jazz greats such as Randy Weston, Horace Silver and Thelonious Monk are also represented as is Brazilian music legend Antonio Carlos Jobim. All of the tunes gel together perfectly from beginning to end. I highly recommend it."

-- Mel Sands, LA Jazz Scene