

BONUS: Two Feature Interviews!

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Eloquent Silence

Zvonimir Tot

Zvonimir Tot – Guitar
Larry Gray – Bass
Ernie Adams – Drums
Orbert Davis – Trumpet, flugelhorn
Mark Colby – Tenor saxophone
Julie Koidin – Alto flute
Stefan Milenkovich – Violin



Zvonimir Tot is back with another outstanding disc, this time for the upstart Chicago Sessions label. Once again, Eipers has given voice to another fantastic project, this time featuring Tot in a much larger lineup than he had previously worked with on record (at least under his own name). *Eloquent Silence* also finds Tot taking many more chances than he had on his previous efforts, and the results are often times quite exciting.

Most of the players here need no introduction to even the casual fans of Chicago's jazz scene. Orbert Davis, Mark Colby, Larry Gray and Ernie Adams are all stellar talents whose combined discographies cover nearly every corner of modern jazz. And Tot is quickly gaining like-minded recognition on guitar, both for his playing, which is stellar, and his writing, which proves to be more and more interesting with each release that he puts out.

Eloquent Silence starts off on a bit of a mellow note before it gets cooking on "Bruce's Dilemma." The playing is amazingly solid through the first couple of tunes. But it's on "Sarabande Blue" that things start to really take off. It's a multi-part tune that seems like it's going to be a beautiful ballad, a showcase for violinist Stefan Milenkovich and Tot, at first. But it slowly starts picking up steam, and after a very cool interlude by Larry Gray, the training wheels come off and the whole band gets moving. It's an amazingly well executed song that is miles away from the AABA forms that jazz fans are used to and it makes one look forward to more collaborations between these two fantastic musicians.

The real ear opener though is "Mira's Do-Re-Mi's." This reminds me at least a bit of Larry Coryell's most rambunctious

work with Gary Burton in their late sixties quartet. Even the melody seems to have a bit of Steve Swallow's influence, but the melody is very obviously an excuse to get to an insanely cool and energetic solo that shows off all of Tot's facilities with a guitar.

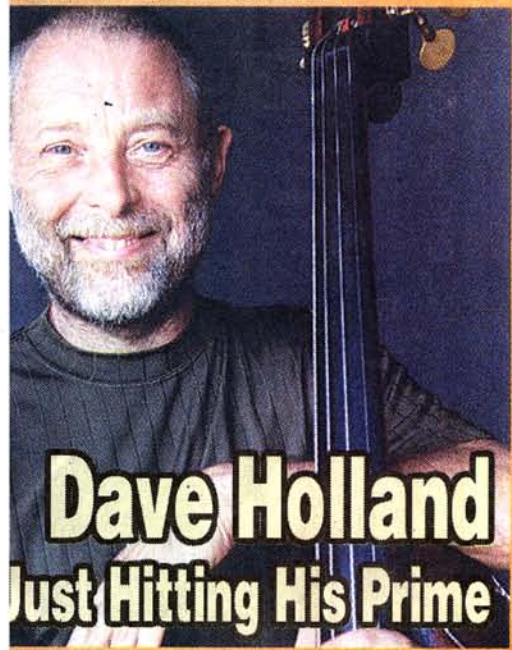
There's no really going up from the heights that "Mira's Do-Re-Mi's" climbs to, so the obvious choice next is a ballad, and Tot wrote a phenomenal one. "Jurre" is a feature for Tot and Mark Colby. Colby, as always, never disappoints. He turns in a great solo here, and it's a beautiful moment on the CD.

Both "Hidden Truths" and "Message Received" offer the listener a chance to hear Tot and company in much more down-to-earth settings. "Message Received" is especially welcome, with its mid-tempo swing, and plenty of space for both Orbert Davis and Mark Colby to stretch out and show off on. "Hidden Truths" is a more modern in its conception and features Tot with Gray and Adams, with Gray getting a healthy solo that doesn't drag down the momentum even one iota.

While one could go through every track here with a fine-tooth comb—and there would be plenty to write about every track—it would simply be a rehash of, *Zvonimir Tot sure sounds awesome*. He's simply a fantastic guitarist who has surrounded himself with some of the most sympathetic support anyone could ask for anywhere. Tot keeps one-upping himself with every disc he puts out, and *Eloquent Silence* is a fantastic example of just how brilliant a guitarist, writer and arranger he is.

—Paul Abella

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Dave Holland Just Hitting His Prime

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