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SADO - 2009 - "Imprescindibile Momento di Cultura Italiana"

(70:08, Banksville Records)



TRACK LIST:

1. Monologo introduttivo su Benedetto Croce-1 1:35
2. Mille Lire al Mese 8:56
3. Monologo introduttivo su Benedetto Croce-2 1:11
4. Anima Mia 8:34
5. Monologo introduttivo su Benedetto Croce-3 1:29
6. Binario 7:54
7. Monologo introduttivo su Benedetto Croce-4 1:16
8. Bambola 9:24
9. Monologo introduttivo su Benedetto Croce-5 0:59
10. Monia 4:57
11. Monologo introduttivo su Benedetto Croce-6 1:22
12. Brava 7:30
13. Monologo introduttivo su Benedetto Croce-7 1:19
14. Donna 7:42
15. Monologo introduttivo su Benedetto Croce-8 1:09
16. Figli Delle Stelle 4:51

LINEUP:

Sandro Marinoni - saxophone, trombone
 Paolo Baltaro - bass; keyboards
 Gianni Salvador Opezzo - guitars
 Andrea Beccaro - drums
 Luigi Ranghino - pianos
 Boris Savoldelli - vocals

Prolusion. The Italian outfit Societa Anonima Decostruzionismi Organici, hereafter known as SADO, released their first album back in 1994, and has since released four more recordings. "Imprescindibile Momento di Cultura Italiana" is the latest of those, and has been available since November 2009.

Analysis. The title of this album reads out as "A Necessary Moment of Italian Culture" translated to English, and reflects upon the fact that the 8 performances on this disc, all of them prefaced by spoken monologues, are works written by more or less well-known Italian composers. But those familiar with these works will be surprised with the contents here anyhow, but more on that later. "Imprescindibile Momento di Cultura Italiana" is actually a live recording from 2008, in which the performances were accompanied by short movies, most of which were made by the band itself. The conceptual framework of the performance consist of snippets and fragments from the life and works of Italian politician, philosopher and critic Benedetto Croce (1866-1952), while the music is described as inspired by the theories of French philosopher Jacques Derrida on deconstructive patterns. The end result showcases why these men describe themselves as a deconstructive meta-jazz band on

their homepage. Jazz is at the core of all the constructions on this album, where the starting reference point may to some extent be described as traditional jazz, at least from a liberal point of view. The band rarely stays within this parameter for long though, as improvisations are a key element throughout. And these efforts will wander freely between improvisational jazz and over to more free-form oriented territories, with frequent inclusions and additions of a more avant-oriented nature. Non-language vocal noises, noisescapes and freely improvising instrumental textures with an emphasis on chaotic constructions, disharmonic disarrays and dissonant sounds are frequently encountered. The band will always return to more melodic and orderly assembled passages on their explorations, to reorient themselves as well as their audience prior to the next improvisational wandering or avant-tinged construction, but the main focus here seems to be the most challenging avant-oriented passages and the manner in which the band evolves their performance from the reference point or musical foundation to these challenging avant-oriented escapades. Personally, I wasn't taken in by these performances though. The performance as such is excellent, but while my intellect was intrigued to some extent by this musical journey, I found the venture to be rather barren as far as emotion and passion are concerned (which, for me, is a central part of all the music I like), it needs to include atmospheres and moods that appeal to the heart and soul and not just the mind alone.

Conclusion. Those who have a keen interest in free form jazz and at times highly challenging avant-oriented rock with a jazz foundation should be thrilled by this album. The musicianship is excellent, and from an intellectual point of view the spoken monologues (English translations are given in the booklet for the CD) together with the subsequent performances should keep the mind pretty busy. However, if you rely on passionate moods to enjoy your music then this album might warrant being approached with some caution. And those who are fond of strong melodies and sophisticated harmonies might want to steer clear of this one, as this is an effort with a total focus on challenging features only.

OMB=Olav M Bjornsen: June 19, 2010
The Rating Room

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Analysis. "Imprescindibile Momento Di Cultura Italiana" is undoubtedly one of the most difficult albums I have had to review, especially as regards the rating part of the process. In fact, while a part of me would like to applaud the boldly subversive operation performed by the irrepressible Societa Anonima Decostruzionismi Organici on a number of well-known songs belonging to the Italian musical tradition of the past one hundred years or so, the other part must admit that I found the album rather hard to get through. In fact, most of the music presented here is so unabashedly free-form as to often border on noise. When listening to this album, it may be hard to believe that half of the band members were once involved with Symphonic/Neo Prog outfit Arcansiel. Now, while the ability to change and renew one's own artistic vision is something I endorse wholeheartedly, I wish some of the melodic flair of 'traditional' prog had rubbed off on SADO's approach, at least as far as "Imprescindibile Momento..." is concerned. This is instead an effort that seems to embody the maxim 'art for art's sake' to perfection: recorded in a theatre, supported by high-profile cultural institutions, and presented in a multilingual package which

includes the texts of each introductory monologue, it is a production addressed to a distinctly highbrow audience. With the exception of the little-known *Monia*, by late Sixties beat band Dalton (not to be confused with the prog band of the same name), all the songs covered by SADO might be defined as ‘sacred cows’ of Italian music, which the band proceed to slay with obvious relish. The band’s irreverent approach is revealed right from the start, in the disc’s resounding title (that in English reads as “Necessary Moment of Italian Culture”) and overtly satirical attitude towards that most sacred of cows, philosopher Benedetto Croce, episodes of whose life are related with deadpan seriousness by the sonorous voice of ‘announcer’ Giovanni Battista Franco. However, the often hilarious connections between the songs and those episodes lighten the intellectual tone of the presentations. The vocal component of the songs is provided by the brilliant Boris Savoldelli, Demetrio Stratos’ natural heir, who on this disc reaches out into more experimental territories than on his debut solo album, “Insanology” (a definitely more accessible effort). One positive thing that can be said about this album is that it really sounds like very little else, and the musicians appear to be genuinely enjoying themselves during their performance. The closest comparison that came to my mind when listening to it for the first time was Tori Amos’ “Strange Little Girls”, when she deconstructs well-known tunes such as The Beatles’ Happiness Is a Warm Gun or Neil Young’s Heart of Gold. Obviously, Amos’ purpose was not quite the same as SADO, but there are undeniable similarities between the two releases – especially the baffling impenetrability of most of those versions. For this reason, it is practically impossible to point out any standout tracks, since all the songs share the same features of improvisational looseness and often downright abrasive nature. Only at times is the original tune recognizable, as at the beginning of *Brava* (whose original version was a vocal tour de force by the iconic Mina) and *Figli Delle Stelle*, where Savoldelli manages to sound uncannily like Alan Sorrenti (one of the most influential musicians of the original Italian prog movement before he turned to commercial pop). In most cases, though, the eight songs are taken apart and put back together as completely different items. Blaring sax, frantic piano flurries and electronic effects abound, only occasionally interspersed by snippets of a more cohesive, melodic nature – like a ‘conventional’ guitar solo or vocal passage. Such a bold statement of an album, produced by a group of outstanding musicians led by a vocalist of Savoldelli’s remarkable talent, would have deserved a higher rating. Unfortunately, as open-minded and curious as I am, I just found “Imprescindibile Momento...” a very arduous proposition. Though I understand that SADO are very proud of their ‘meta-jazz’ approach to music-making, this album sounds more like an intellectual exercise than something to be actually enjoyed.

Conclusion. In spite of its intriguing premise, as well as the considerable talent involved in its making, “Imprescindibile Momento di Cultura Italiana” is clearly an album with a very limited appeal. Unless it is taken as a mere novelty (which would be rather unfair), its main audience will be restricted to free-jazz enthusiasts. It is to be hoped that SADO will be able to reconcile their praiseworthy experimental tendencies with a slightly more accessible approach in their future releases.

RB=Raffaella Berry: Agst 12, 2010
The Rating Room

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