

Thing-Ah-Majig

Review from the Italian edition of *All About Jazz*,

AUGUST 2005

5 STARS

Numerous recordings have been left since the 1950's from record labels that have recorded the history of jazz (Prestige, Verve, Milestone, Atlantic) with names such as Miles Davis, Lee Konitz, Roy Haynes, Max Roach, Warne Marsh, Eddie Gomez. This is the resume of Sal Mosca, pianist of the Tristano School, who can be heard today on the Zinnia Record label, distributed by North Country and produced by Dan Fiore. Zinnia Records allows us to listen to these types of recordings again. It has been since 1959 that Sal Mosca has recorded in a trio format: the last time was with Peter Ind and Dick Scott, and now with Don Messina and Bill Chattin, a rhythm section that works together with Sal from time to time, his health permitting.

If you ask if Sal still has something to say within the scope of a contemporary piano trio, or if he can still make timeless music that is not just a revival of things from decades past, you will quickly have an answer after listening to one of the standards like "I'm Getting Sentimental Over You" that opens this disc (Thing ah majig): Mosca is an artist whose language has crossed the history of jazz (without ever becoming a clone of Lennie Tristano) and today he plays paradoxically modern and interesting, representing an alternative to the current approach of jazz piano trios that follow the model of Monk, Bill Evans, Chick Corea, Herbie Hancock,

and McCoy Tyner, all of whom have been taught in the jazz schools to their students.

The improvisational capacity of Sal Mosca is simply beyond the norm, thus the depth with which he approaches the structure of a standard, renewing them from the inside, going into unforeseeable territory, then returning to the theme without us ever realizing the roads that were taken; astonishing and surprising us at every instance.

The work of this trio is complex, and at the same time spontaneously improvised on the structures of these standards (here respected in their essence) are made to "leap" from within with a recomposed capacity that belongs to very few jazz artists.

The ideas of the three players are always new as they wind from one song to the other rendering the album very compact and free of repetition. The final result of these historical interpretations confirms Sal Mosca to be the premier pianist of the contemporary jazz scene.

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ALL ABOUT JAZZ - ITALY

Translated by Luigi Napoli and Mark Diorio (August 2005)