

JazzTrenzz

Come Escape With Me Amina Figarova

Candelabras are lit as the champagne glistens from the sparkle of the crystal. Romance is in our midst and the delicate tones off of the keys are none other than Amina Figarova's exquisite gifts. Known for her composition and subtle sounds off her Steinway Grand, Ms. Figarova once again shapes a project together that ignites the innovative creations she endlessly delivers with each live/studio performance.

Released in 2005 by Munich Records, "Come Escape With Me" is just that, an escape. For whatever reason in whatever direction, her music and arrangements take you where you wish to go. The music enclosed has many talented features some of which have entertained on many levels. Bart Platteau mastering the reed on his flute adds the most delicate of moments throughout the project, Marcel Reys is especially genuine in his control of the brass. The sax is owned and operated by Tom Beek who kicks up on many of the tunes. Along with others this is a very diverse and well structured jazz collection. The collection of music seemed to be well thought out and crafted.

"Buckshot Blues" is just so very cool. The drum solo by Chris Strik is great fun and the brass rolls very nicely back into play. Striking arrangement!

"Awakening" is another selection worth note. The delicate balance of piano and Wiro Mahieu's bass at one point is as romance should be, soft spoken but with distinct and precise meaning.

Marcel Reys again ignites fury with his trumpet in "Blues for Wiro" as well as the rest of the brass class. Fever pitch arranging is what was created by Ms. Figarova, pure energy scripted on music sheet.

Although refined and precise, Ms. Figarova has created numerous characters and moods with in her project. It has style yet at times lets loose with uncalculated risk. I truly like this project. I says to all future composers and arrangers, take the next step, its worth the pleasure you unleash.

Karl Stober is a national freelance music journalist/interviewer.

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".....AMINA FIGAROVA and her group close out this segment from her new CD, COME ESCAPE WITH ME. This lady has a firm grasp of the post hard bop concept. This is all original material written and arranged by Figarova. We played a trio version of "Destiny." On this selection, you hear and understand how Figarova's mind works, with commitment and sophistication -simple in it's profundity, very figurative beautiful music. She's a taskmaster....."

Come Escape with Me **Amina Figarova | Munich Records**

By Jim Santella

The modern mainstream fits Amina Figarova like a glove. Her compositions carry with them an exotic feeling of anticipation along with their mesmerizing groove. At the piano, she's in control, improvising over lovely melodies and creating a storm of subdued passion.

Her septet has been together for five years. Figarova's husband, Bart Platteau, holds down the flute chair for this band that has two previous CD releases. Their work plays out cohesively, and they interpret each piece with outstanding musical attention to detail. Everything falls into place with spot-on results.

“Mr. T.M.” may be a dedication to Thelonious Monk. The piece moves in a Monk-like manner, tossing and turning its melody with constant surprises, while its rhythmic groove penetrates thoroughly. Trumpeter Marcel Keys and Figarova step out with searing solo work that heightens the performance considerably. The leader's powerful phrases and seamless phrasing contribute considerable fire, along with the session's pure musical qualities.

“Buckshot Blues” may be a dedication to Buckshot LeFonque. The piece features alto saxophonist Tom Beek in what may be a salute to Cannonball Adderley as well as an homage to New Orleans-born and bred saxophonist Branford Marsalis. The piece's dynamic New Orleans shuffle loosens up the reins for a while and leaves plenty of room for the septet to ramble.

“Blues for Wiro” features bassist Wiro Mahieu in a dramatic affair that rages uptempo in a fiery display of jazz's helter-skelter spontaneity. His virtuosic bass showcase lends a hearty post bop texture to the session.

Figarova's ballad, “Destiny,” puts her in the spotlight to explore dreamy keyboard sequences with the trio. Bassist Mahieu and drummer Chris Strik surround the pianist's broad piano strokes with soothing textures suitable for a heartfelt ballad. Recommended, *Come Escape with Me* explores jazz's modern mainstream with a driving rhythmic groove, impeccably tight septet arrangements, and refreshing piano keyboard magic.

View the article here:

<http://www.allaboutjazz.com/php/article.php?id=16871>

Jim Santella has been contributing CD reviews, concert reviews and DVD reviews to AAJ since 1997. His work has also appeared in *Southland Blues*, *The L.A. Jazz Scene*, and *Cadence Magazine*. More about Jim...

CD Title: Come Escape With Me

Year: 2005

Record Label: Munich Records

Style: Straight-Ahead / Classic

Musicians: Amina Figarova (piano), Marcel Reys (trumpet, flugelhorn), Bart Platteau (flute, Bb flute, wooden flutes), Tom Beek (alto & soprano saxophones), Kurt van Herck (tenor saxophone), Wiro Mahieu (bass), Chris Strik (drums)

Review: Amina Figarova has been recording her jazz septet in Holland for several years now, previously recording two CD and touring the world, including in her native country of Azerbaijan. Certainly one of the best-known, if not the only, jazz musician from Baku to make a career in jazz, Figarova, one would expect, might combine some of her native musical influences with the vocabulary of jazz she learned in her studies at Rotterdam Conservatory and Berklee. But no so. Instead, Figarova is solidly in the jazz tradition as it developed through the legendary piano trios and hard bop recordings of the last half century. And the members of her group as just as talented and consumed by the genre as Figarova.

Come Escape With Me starts with a crash, Figarova's own on piano, as the group enters into a fierce hard boppish 6/8 drive played at first in unison, separated by the tentative and softer bridge. But once tenor saxman Kurt van Herck enters, after the first minute of play-and particularly when Figarova's husband Bart Platteau comes in with a swirling flute solo-we know that these are top-shelf players and that the CD will be one that certainly has a lot of offer.

Figarova composed all of the pieces for her new CD, and wisely she presents a varied repertoire of music to showcase the versatility of her group. "Flight Of Fancy," for instance, allows Figarova to lead the group with her flowing, unhurried piano work as the horns color the background. And "Destiny" is entirely a piano trio presentation, complete with an empathetic bass solo by Wiro Maheiru and understated drumwork by Chris Strik, cymbals sizzling and tapped. Indeed, Strik's in-the-background work throughout the CD animates the sound as much as Figarova's three-part horn arrangements do. On "Buckshot Blues," the Dutch musicians adopt the street rhythms of New Orleans, largely due to the success of Strik's energy and dead-on capture of the style. As if in contrast, "Zealot" starts with Strik's softer work on tom-toms, where he sets the mood for an evocative melody effectively arranged in call-and-response fashion while two of the horns reflect the melody of the flute-led song. "Market Place" is as close to a world-music piece as Figarova allows as she and Platteau engage in intertwining rubato lines of introduce. But even that doesn't last, for Figarova quickly moves into another 6/8 movement creating a heightening of tension for final resolution before the bridge and the ending.

Come Escape With Me is an outstanding CD featuring an artist who normally would not achieve as much recognition for her talent without it. It certainly deserves a listen, for

Figarova not only is an unselfish and spirited piano player, but she's also an effective leader and composer respectful of jazz tradition even as she personalizes it.

Tracks: Come Escape With Me, Hot On The Trail, Flight Of Fancy, Mr. T.M., Dancing In The Wind, Buckshot Blues, Zealot, Awakening, Blues For Wiro, Destiny, Market Place, Reaching Out To You

Record Label Website: <http://www.munichrecords.com>

Artist's Website: <http://www.aminafigarova.com>

Reviewed by: Don Williamson

<http://www.jazzreview.com/cdreview.cfm?ID=9107>

Following review will be in issue # 70, due up 'round end-March to mid-April:

Amina Figarova - COME ESCAPE WITH ME: From the opening bar, you can hear that this will be a total jazz experience! Amina's piano skills are clearly evident, but it's really her compositional expertise that shines through on this septet grouping. The flutes by Bart Platteau swirl in, out & around the opening (title) track, in one of the most highly energetic outings I've heard (yet) this year. Wiro Mathieu's acoustic bass work on "Come Escape With Me" is not only supportive, it lays a foundation for Figarova's strident keyboard styling that is superb. All of the players are great & there is no one "stepping" on other players. This is the kind of group you have been looking for, & to watch them live would be pure joy, I've no doubt. Unfortunately, right now you'd probably have to go to South Africa to do that, as they'll be playing at the Capetown International Jazz Festival for a few months, as well as UK & Israel. You might be able to catch them (just a bit later in the year) in New Orleans, though. Amina's writing & composition style take me back years & years, to jazz greats like "The Crusaders", "Cannonball Adderley", even Lee Morgan... some really H-O-T jazz licks. I just DIG on her keyboard playing, & I know you will too. This gets a MOST HIGHLY RECOMMENDED from our overly-jazzified ears... a truly classic "KEEPER"! Contact through her site, at www.aminafigarova.com (& be sure to tell them Zzaj sent you)! Some really GREAT jazz! Rotcod Zzaj

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"...AMINA FIGAROVA is next with a new CD , COME ESCAPE WITH ME . This is a septet of some very good mainstream jazz players. Along with Amina, Bart Plateau has a lot to do with the production. Amina wrote and arranged the whole set. So you can pick up on Figarova's statement throughout... She's a rising talent in mainstream jazz. Reminds me of René Rosnes, in her use of various multi rhythmi, ethnic forms. Last year she toured the states with a quintet. Keep your eyes and ears open for this evolving jazz talent, Amina Figarova...."

Come Escape with Me
Amina Figarova | Munich Records

By Dan McClenaghan

Many successful jazz pianists got their start, at early ages, studying classical music. Then jazz lures them away. A constant surprise is the verve and energy so many of these classically trained musicians bring to improvisation.

Born in Baku, Azerbaijan and now based in the Netherlands, pianist Amina Figarova's *Come Escape with Me* bristles with energy and originality on her first solo, a joyful piano interlude inside the title tune's classic jazz arrangement. Figarova leads a septet here—trumpet, flute, alto and tenor saxophones on the front line, backed by the rhythm section—and one of the things you notice right off is the silkiness the flute brings to the harmonies, in addition to giving the band another solo voice you don't hear every day in jazz ensembles.

The band has a fresh, swinging, sometimes hard-driving sound. “Buckshot Blues” cooks uptempo, with a Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers zing; and “Zeolot” has a lilting quality, flute in the forefront in the opening, giving way to a laid back tenor sax. The group has been together for five years, and its comfort level and seamless sound over the exotic rhythm leads into another of Figarova's tastefully buoyant solo slots.

“Reaching Out To You,” a lovely song with some achingly beautiful sax work, showcases Figarova's—and the band's—prowess with balladry, while “Blues for Wiro” showcases the group in a bright, boppish, forward momentum mode.

Fine jazz sounds from the Netherlands: sometimes elegant, sometimes kicking out the jams, always interesting.

