

all about FALL

all about JAZZ

Minton's Playhouse, one of the most storied locales in the history of jazz but shuttered since 1974, recently reopened in its original Harlem space on West 118th Street and St. Nicholas Avenue. While like their beloved forebears may not yet be holding court there in addition to the upper Manhattan jazz scene, saxophonist Patrice Higgins has a regular Wednesday night gig at the re-born club and recently played for a small crowd of locals and tourists (Jan. 14th). Higgins and his Sugar Hill Jazz Quartet—Marcus Persiani (keyboard), Andy McClintock (drums) and Billy Kilson (bass)—took the stage to promote to be the killer bebop's live on...



spotted salsa feel to Barry Harris' "Nascimento" with Higgins and Persiani stretching out for lengthy solos

Higgins delivered a "mellow" lesson on Monk's residence in San Juan Hill & Lincoln Center, then launched into a solo perfectly clean and robust tone. The quartet hit into the warhorse "Satin Doll" by playing alternating 4/8 and 4/4 time. Guest vocalist Uly Slaughter brought some Sunday church to Ellington's "Mellow Tone", during which Higgins displayed adept ear for imitating Slaughter's falsetto in taking note for note.

By Ron Scott

Pianist Marcus Persiani is the consummate sideman having played with Cecil McBee, Willie Colón, Paquito D'Rivera, Max Roach and Mario Bauzá's Afro Cuban Big Band. This composer, arranger has a weakness for Latin music and his definitive Latin styled-piano rhythms on *Uptown Suite* is a testament. Persiani offers Latin passages in a straight-ahead jazz format that swings in all the right places.

This recording is reminiscent of those days when bands played as a tight cohesive unit and solos were not the order of the day. These nine original compositions by Persiani are tight arrangements but allow for his able musicians to swing with distinct solos and exciting improvisational moments. There are different things going on but the groups are always in unison and listeners are never lost in their creative flow.

Uptown Suite marks Persiani's debut as a leader while showcasing his skills as a talented composer and of course, his skills as a pianist precedes him. Since this is an independent recording Persiani was the go-to guy wearing all hats and working closely with the engineer. With so much going on behind the scenes Persiani made the decision to use not one but two bands for this wonderful recording. Both units are tight and the music has not been compromised in the least, it's like having two great CDs' in one.

The primary band consists of bassist Joseph Lapore, tenor & soprano saxophonist Grant Langford, trumpeter Duane Eubanks and drummer Dave Gibson. The second unit playing on only three cuts includes tenor saxophonist Peter Brinen, bassist Brad Jones, Tony Rosa on congas and Batas and drummer Vince Chericco.

The first band is rather mean on "Prairie Style," everyone gets an opportunity to stretch. Saxophonist Langford called a young lion by observers and critics, is featured here. His solos are riveting but possess a smooth flow with an unwavering tone. Persiani plays a mix of fiery chords as Eubanks trumpet soars and Gibson's drums plays melodic undertones.

"Shell Reading" is a textured endeavor with the second unit pushing an intense rhythmic flow with Persiani making a profound statement playing heavy chords throughout; Chericco's drums are blazing, as is Brinen's tenor, a deep intoxicating tone. The passionate playing of Rosa's congas is exhilarating as the bass simmers in the height of this explosive tune.

This is Persiani's debut as a leader but with such a great sound, creative compositions and the ability to combine styles and genres, his life as a leader is just beginning.

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Marcus Persiani

UPTOWN SUITE—Independent. Uptown
www.mpersiani.com. 212-927-4363.
Suite; Little Chunky; Basta Ya Bata Blues,
Stoney Island, Waltz for Carmen Miranda, La
Mer Viper, Secrets, Minoret, Prairie Style, Shell
Reading.
PERSONNEL: Marcus Persiani, piano; Joseph
Lapore, bass; Grant Langford, tenor & soprano
saxophone; Duane Eubanks, trumpet; David
Gibson, drums.



Jazz en vivo

El Taller de Jazz Open House celebra su 30
años de promoción cultural con una serie de
eventos. El próximo sábado 15 de julio a las
8:00pm se presenta el Taller de Jazz en vivo
al cuidado del piano Marcus Persiani.
El concierto será en el salón de la
Compañía. El evento será en español y
será gratuito. El taller de jazz en vivo
es una oportunidad única para aprender
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