



HOMEPAGE

NEWS

REVIEWS

INTERVIEWS

EVENTS

PROFILES

LINKS

**WEB RESOURCES**

- ▶ Articles
- ▶ Radio Shows
- ▶ Internet Radio
- ▶ A/V Webcasts
- ▶ Jazz Festivals

**CONTRIBUTIONS**

- ▶ Suggest Link
- ▶ Submit Review
- ▶ Submit Article

**ABOUT US**

- ▶ Who We Are
- ▶ Credits

**CONTACT US**

- ▶ Send Us Email
- ▶ Snail Mail

Latinjazz  
eGroup  
Moderated by  
Luis Moreno



The hottest  
Latin jazz  
discussion group  
JOIN US NOW!



**MIGUEL ZENON**  
**Looking Forward**

2001 Fresh Sound/New Talent (FSNT119-CD)

For those of you who adhere to the notion that youth is wasted on the young, think again. Take for instance, the extraordinarily talented Miguel Zenón, who is all of 25 years "old."

In his short but remarkable career Zenón has performed and recorded with a diverse array of artists and groups; Danilo Pérez, William Cepeda's Afro Rican Jazz, the Either Orchestra, John Benítez, Gabriel Rodríguez, Brian Lynch, The Village Vanguard Orchestra, the Jason Lindner Big Band and the Grammy nominated David Sánchez Sextet.

It is difficult to comprehend that the saxophone was not Zenón's first instrument of choice, however, as he tells it, "When I arrived at the "Escuela Libre de Música" in Puerto Rico (at the age of 11) I really wanted to play the piano but they there were too many piano students, so I had to choose another instrument. I had taken some music lessons and had a saxophone (which I could not play) so I decided to stick with the sax."

Moreover, Zenón was not so sure he wanted to be a musician at all! He was far more interested in "science, mathematics and other stuff." As time passed he warmed up to the idea of pursuing a career as a musician.

Zenón's formal studies began when he received a scholarship from the Puerto Rico Heineken Jazz Festival. He then attended the Berklee School of Music, where he received the Berklee Best Scholarship Award, the Cameron Weber award and a grant from the Corporation of Musical Arts of Puerto Rico. In 1998 Zenón received a scholarship to attend the prestigious Manhattan School of Music where he received his Master in Saxophone Performance (2001).

Looking Forward marks the first step in Zenón's musical journey as a leader. "What I am trying to achieve is to present the listener with a vision of the way I perceive music at this point in my life. I (also) felt that I had to get some of my music documented in order to keep evolving and growing as a musician. This would encourage me to come up with new ideas and write new material."

The music is a fusion of jazz, Latin, American, classical music and folkloric Puerto Rican rhythms. Zenón calls it, "a musical entity."

For example, "J. S. B" was inspired by Johanne Sebastian Bach and is based on "Prelude and Fugue #3 in C -Sharp Major." "Yochabel" (named after Zenón's

sister) is a fusion of plena and straight-ahead jazz. "Anxiety" is an idea inspired by the 20th century composer Charles Ives and saxophonist Ornette Coleman that combines free form improvisation and shades of Bomba. "El Bloque" was inspired by the music of Igor Stravinsky and features a Bomba rhythm called "Holandes." It was written to accommodate the alto sax (Zenón) and tenor sax (David Sánchez) trading improvisations throughout the composition. "Campanitas de Cristal" is an updated version of a classic Rafael Hernández composition and "Alma con Alma," is a luscious ballad by Juanito Marquez.

Artistic freedom was a key factor in Zenón's decision to record for Fresh Sound (his record label), "I chose Fresh Sound because they were the only record company that offered me complete control over what was going to be done musically and total freedom in terms of production."

The band is a combination of colleagues, friends and musicians Zenón admires: David Sánchez (tenor saxophone), Hans Glawischnig (bass), Pernell Saturnino (percussion), Luis Perdomo (piano), Antonio Sánchez (drums), Diego Urcola (trumpet), Ben Monder (guitar) and William Cepeda (bomba drums, vocals). "I chose the musicians because I love them as players and felt that they could contribute something to the type of 'fusion' I was trying to achieve."

Zenón sums up his philosophy, "My intention was to create a musical melting pot by exploring the endless possibilities and combining various musical elements. I look forward to seeing this type of music evolve in the future. It is an ongoing creative process that I hope to build on with time and experience."

Review by Thomas Peña



Tracks:

1. Prayer #1 (Blessing)
2. Looking Forward
3. Yochabel
4. Pequeña Serenata Diurna [ [listen](#) ]
5. Campanitas de Cristal [ [listen](#) ]
6. Anxiety [ [listen](#) ]
7. El Bloque [ [listen](#) ]
8. J.S.B.
9. Alma Con Alma [ [listen](#) ]
10. El Cruze [ [listen](#) ]
11. Prayer #2 (Thanksgiving)

