

Zbigniew Namyslowski - Mozart Goes Jazz (1999)

Written by bluesever

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01. Zapowiedz 02. Allegro 03. Larghetto 04. Minuetto 05. Soul Variazione 06. Variazione Caribiense 07. Variazione Di Blue 08. Allegro Finale 09. Wariacja Goralska Zbigniew Namyslowski - Alto Saxophone, Sopranino Saxophone Wojciech Mrozek - Clarinet Kwartet Camerata: Wlodzimierz Prominski - 1st Violin Andrzej Korzycki - 2nd Violin Piotr Reichert - Viola Roman Hoffmann - Cello Kwartet Jazzowy Zbigniewa Namyslowskiego: Krzysztof Herdzin - Piano Olo Walicki - Double Bass Grzegorz Grzyb - Drums

This is probably the least known as well as most unusual album by veteran Polish Jazz saxophonist / composer / band leader Zbigniew Namyslowski, who is associated with the local scene continuously since the late 1950s. The album consists of a live recording captured by the Polish Radio, which presents a Jazz arrangement of Amadeus Mozart's Clarinet Concerto in A major, K 622, performed by Namyslowski's quartet, clarinetist Wojciech Mrozek and the Camerata string quartet. The Zbigniew Namyslowski quartet at the time of the recording included also pianist Krzysztof Herdzin, bassist Olgierd Walicki and drummer Grzegorz Grzyb. Mozart's masterpiece, which was his last completed work before his untimely death, consists of three movements, but this extended interpretation adds five more "variations". All the pieces were arranged by Namyslowski, except the middle movement of the original concerto, which was arranged by Herdzin.

Of course this is by far not the first attempt of creating Classical-Jazz Fusion, which has been attempted countless times before. The matching of these often distant musical idioms is probably the most perilous area, and this album is a "classic" (pun intended) example why. The idea behind such attempts is of course to fuse the two idioms and create an amalgam, which somehow manages to preserve the best of both ingredients and create a new flavor, previously unknown. Sadly the music presented here fails completely in that sense, as far as I am concerned. The resulting music mixes Mozart's melodic themes with Jazz rhythms and improvisations, but the resulting music simply sounds unsavory. Sort of "pickles with marmalade", which makes sense to pregnant women only.

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Of course Namyslowski and his crew are all wonderful musicians and perform spotlessly all the way through, as do their Classical counterparts. There are many showcases of splendid musicianship and inspired soloing. However the overall atmosphere simply doesn't let one enjoy this music. Mozart dancing calypso is simply not my cup of rum...

But considering Namyslowski's remarkably long and otherwise spotless career and tremendous contribution to Polish Jazz, this excursion is easily forgiven, as it is forgotten. ---Adam Baruch, polish-jazz.blogspot.com

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