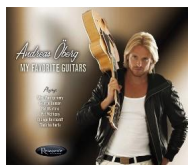


Andreas Oberg - My Favorite Guitars (2008)

Written by bluesever

Wednesday, 03 July 2019 15:33 -

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1. *Funky Tango (Luis Salinas)* 5:32 2. *Troublant Bolero (Django Reinhardt)* 6:13 3. *Waiting For Angela (Toninho Horta)* 5:43 4. *Aqui, Oh (Toninho Horta)* 5:15 5. *Uptown Down (Pat Martino)* 4:00 6. *AM Call (Andreas Öberg)* 6:24 7. *The Changing World (George Benson)* 4:38 8. *The Trick Bag (Wes Montgomery)* 5:11 9. *Here To Stay (Pat Metheny)* 5:13 10. *Endless Love (Andreas Öberg)* 5:13 11. *Villa Hermosa (Pat Martino)* 6:34 12. *Valdez In The Country (Donny Hathaway)* 4:44
Andreas Öberg - Electric & Acoustic Guitar Kuno Schmid - Piano or Keyboards (01) Tamir Hendelman - Piano or Keyboards (02) Marian Petrescu - Piano or Keyboards (03) Kevin Axt - Bass Harish Raghavan - Bass Kuno Schmid - Keyboard Bass (06) Vic Stevens - Drums & Percussion

Andreas Oberg honors several of the most recognized guitarists in jazz through this contemporary outing, where his guitar speaks for generations and his smooth approach appeals to a broad audience. A full studio orchestra complements much of the program as Oberg's guitar floats effortlessly over the gathering.

An appealing Brazilian atmosphere pervades on "Aqui, Oh," where the leader's wordless vocals ride waves of warmth that wash over his acoustic guitar with pleasurable results. Oberg enjoys a fluid technique where notes run clear and distinct. When keyboard player Kuno Schmid steps forward, the contrast between his muddy cascades and the guitarist's clearly-defined runs is magnified.

With Oberg's ballad "Endless Love," acoustic guitar takes over with a folksong approach while the studio orchestra colors from a distance. With "Funky Tango" and "Waiting for Angela," it's the background instrumentation from the keyboards and the orchestra that occupy much of the focus. Oberg enjoys a better stride when paring it down and allowing his guitar to shine.

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Elsewhere, as on "Uptown Downtown," "Villa Hermosa" and "Here to Stay," the guitarist finds his niche as he fits comfortably into Pat Martino's bag with all points covered. He's at his best when improvising alongside the small group and excluding the lush orchestra and surround-sound keyboard swirls. ---Jim Santella, allaboutjazz.com

Swedish jazz guitarist Andreas Öberg has been quoted as saying that one of his desires is to "make music that can appeal to people who don't like jazz." Many hardcore jazz musicians become nervous and apprehensive when they hear other improvisers talking about commercializing jazz in some fashion or making jazz more accessible to rock, pop or R&B fans; they think of all the robotic elevator music that smooth jazz/NAC radio stations have played in the '80s, '90s and 21st century. But *My Favorite Guitars* is an album that, despite its commercial appeal, isn't going to win over the Kenny G./Najee/Richard Elliott crowd. Öberg isn't trying to be the Dave Koz of the guitar -- far from it. Actually, the best stylistic comparison on this 64-minute CD -- which finds Öberg paying tribute to other guitarists -- would be the pre-Breezin' CTI albums that Creed Taylor produced for George Benson (one of Öberg's main influences) in the late '60s and early '70s. At times, Taylor was guilty of overproducing, but when he achieved the right balance of jazz and commercial considerations, he soared as a producer -- and *My Favorite Guitars* achieves that type of balance. This 2008 release isn't in a class with Benson's best CTI releases, but it's definitely respectable. Although Öberg brings a strong sense of groove to the table, he has plenty of room to stretch out and improvise whether he is paying tribute to Benson on "The Changing World," Django Reinhardt on "Troublant Bolero," Pat Metheny on "Here to Stay," or Wes Montgomery (another major influence) on "The Trick Bag." *My Favorite Guitars* won't appeal to jazz purists or bop snobs, but it has integrity and demonstrates that an improviser can reach out to pop and R&B fans and still maintain an improvisatory, jazz-oriented focus. ---Alex Henderson, [AllMusic Review](http://AllMusic.com)

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