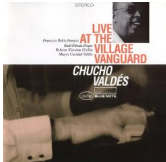


Chucho Valdés - Live At The Village Vanguard (2000)

Written by bluesever

Tuesday, 10 May 2011 18:34 - Last Updated Tuesday, 19 August 2014 13:26

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01 Anabis 02 Son XXI (Para Pia) 03 Punto Cubano 04 My Funny Valentine 05 To Bud Powell 06 Drume Negrita [play](#) 07 Como Traigo La Yuca 08 Ponle La Clave 09 Encore - Lorraine's Habanera

Line-Up: Chucho Valdés - piano
Francisco Rubio Pampín - Bass Raul Pineda Roque - trap drums Roberto Vizcaino Guillot - conga , bata drums Mayra Caridad Valdés - Vocals. Recorded live at the Village Vanguard, New York, New York on April 9 & 10, 1999.

LIVE AT THE VILLAGE VANGUARD won the 2001 Grammy Award for Best Latin Jazz Album.

If Blue Note's alert microphones were present at Chucho Valdés's historic 1998 debut at the hallowed Village Vanguard, the results haven't officially landed in our CD machines yet. But the mikes were there, alright, the following year -- and they caught some virulent Cuban tempests (as the announcer warns, accurately, "There's a hurricane approaching from the Caribbean"). Yet the heat was turned up so much on Valdés's previous studio albums that the presence of a live audience only increases the temperature slightly here. Once again, Valdés's command of the keyboard is so technically staggering as to be stupefying, and he liberally throws in quotes from just about everything he ever absorbed -- from Chopin and Debussy to the Gershwins, Cecil Taylor and avant-garde strumming of the piano strings. He has so powerful an individual identity that "To Bud Powell" is more about Chucho than the late bop pianist. Yet the best, most fun track on the CD, "Punto Cubano," gives credence to the old saw about less being more. Built mostly around a simple tonic-dominant vamp; it has a Jarrett-like directness of melody and irresistible swing, though Chucho still isn't loath to turn on the big guns when desired. The long-running rhythm section of Francisco Rubio Pampin (bass), Raúl Pineda Roque (drums), and Roberto Vizcaino Guillót (congas), keeps Chucho all stoked up and steaming throughout the set. Also Valdés's sister, Mayra Caridad, lends a husky Miriam Makeba-sized voice to the not-so-peaceful lullaby "Drume Negrita." This is yet another excellent addition to the distinguished line of eventful Village Vanguard live sessions, brought to you through the politically neutral resources of EMI Music Canada. ~ Richard S. Ginell.

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This beautifully mixed sampling from the Cuban pianist's celebrated 1999 New York engagement with his quartet displays both Valdís' keyboard virtuosity and his mastery of Latin jazz. Each song is a universe, spanning the entire range of human emotions. On the jazzy "Ponle La Clave," Valdís and percussionist Robert Vizcaino Guillst vie gracefully for harmonic control. "Como Traigo La Yuca" stays loyal to the Cuban son, with Valdís mamboing over the keyboard as his right hand evanesces into chromatic doodles. "Punto Cubano" is constructed like a symphony, welding two main themes together with bluesy intermezzos. The standard "My Funny Valentine" is reconfigured as a sweetly poignant danzón, with Francisco Rubio Pampin playing a lyrical bass. The slinky, Arabic-flavored "Son XXI" ripples so richly that it sounds as if Valdís is playing two pianos at once, while the languorous "Drume Negrita" is sung with enormous soul by Chucho's sister, the throaty alto Mayra Caridad Valdís. ---Rhythm Magazine

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