

Melissa Aldana - Melissa Aldana & Crash Trio (2014)

Written by bluesever

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1 *M&M* 4:58 2 *Turning* 5:45 3 *You're My Everything* 5:34 4 *Bring Him Home* 5:10 5 *Tirapié* 6:09 6 *Peace, Love & Music* 5:50 7 *Perdón* 4:20 8 *New Points* 6:39 9 *Dear Joe* 3:57 10 *Ask Me Now* 4:15 Bass – Pablo Menares Drums – Francisco Mela Tenor Saxophone – Melissa Aldana

Chilean tenor saxophonist and composer Melissa Aldana was the first female to win the Thelonious Music International Institute's competition for saxophone. Though her two previous recordings were noteworthy as showcases for her soloing and compositions, it is with Crash Trio -- Chilean bassist Pablo Menares and Cuban drummer Francisco Mela (both are also composers) -- that she shines brightest. Save for readings of Harry Warren's "You're My Everything" and a tenor solo on Monk's "Ask Me Now," the entire program was written by the trio's various members. Aldana possesses a big, earthy, edgy tone deeply influenced by Sonny Rollins, but her phrasing is her own. While swinging post-bop is predominant, forward-thinking harmonic ideas informed by composers/musicians Kurt Rosenwinkel and Mark Turner add balance to the attack. Aldana's "M&M" features a stellar walking bassline from Menares and a tight, hard-grooving head from the saxophonist. She explores its various individual elements, recombining them and moving them afield in her solo. The long, folk-like bass solo intro to Menares' "Tirapie" is gorgeous and gives way to a minor-key, midtempo, Latin-tinged ballad that showcases the canny interplay of the rhythm section. Aldana's solo is nearly song-like. Mela's "Dear Joe" kicks off with a bright, Caribbean rhythmic signature, and Menares and Aldana paint a knotty, joyous carnivalesque melody. The taut arpeggios in the saxophonist's solo take place in all three registers with soulful verve as Mela's accents, fills, and rimshot rolls -- alongside his cruising ride cymbal -- create an infectious, nearly danceable groove. Aldana's "New Points" is breezily and gently informed by Brazilian samba. On the Monk tune, she displays tremendous control and an avid imagination that keeps the composer's melody firmly at the root of her investigation. Melissa Aldana & Crash Trio is fresh, sophisticated, invigorating modern jazz that deserves notice for its fine tunes and seamless execution. ---Thom Jurek, allmusic.com

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