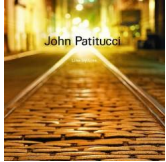


John Patitucci - Line By Line (2006)

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01. The Root 4:10 02. Agitato 4:14 03. Circular 6:29 04. Folklore 6:25 05. Dry September 5:53 06. Nana 3:26 07. Theme and Variations for 6-String Bass and Strings 9:37 08. Line By Line 6:56 09. Evidence 5:56 10. Jesus Is On The Mainline 3:18 11. Incarnation 3:57 12. Soaring 3:51 13. Tone Poem 2:58 14. Up With The Lark 5:17 John Patitucci - double bass and 6-string electric bass; Adam Rogers - electric and nylon-string guitars; Brian Blade - drums; Chris Potter - tenor saxophone; Richard Rood - violin; Elizabeth Liam-Dutton - violin; Lawrence Dutton -viola; Sachi Patitucci - cello; Jeremy McCoy - double-bass.

After the brilliant chaos of the Wayne Shorter quartet, it's entirely understandable that John Patitucci would want to try something a little more sedate. Line by Line gives the versatile bassist a chance to go places we might not expect. The trip is interesting, though the destinations sometimes are not.

Patitucci is all over the board, both instrumentally and stylistically. Writing the lion's share of the tunes, he alternates between double-bass and six-string electric, playing both in a trio format (occasionally and brilliantly augmented by tenor man Chris Potter) and in a string quintet led by cellist/spouse Sachi Patitucci. It's the latter matrix that trips this disc up.

Patitucci flirts with the Third Stream on "Theme and Variations for 6-String Bass and Strings," which Sachi leads off with an achingly beautiful solo. Patitucci keeps it on the high end, giving his solo the feel of classical guitar as he works through the intricate paths of the piece; he uses the same effect on the opener, "The Root," and the closing solo piece, "Tone Poem." Like all of his compositions on Line by Line, "Themes" is incredibly detailed and cannot be digested with one listen. It also dovetails with the previous tune, the mournful Manuel de Falla composition "Nana."

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Where "Themes" is interesting as a stylistic attempt, "Incarnation" and "Soaring" are not. They follow a ripping electric trio take on Monk's "Evidence" and a truly greasy double-bass solo version of Mississippi Fred McDowell's "Jesus is on the Mainline." The latter pieces were where this disc really started to jump for me, but Patitucci chose to step out of the Third Stream and head directly to classical music. Leaving that earlier funky vibe to go into chamber music mode simply made me impatient, forcing me to resist pressing the skip button.

Potter's wailing solos on "Agitato" and "Folklore" give the disc momentum, breaking away from the navel-staring, meditative vibe that threatened to dominate its early stages. Brian Blade, a fellow Shorter quartet sideman, continues to be the most interesting drummer in the genre. He keeps the trio pieces interesting when Patitucci and Rogers get bogged down, and his rattlesnake-like cymbals on Rogers' "Dry September" accentuate the feeling of a musical desert where nothing ever grows.

Line by Line shows Patitucci's growth as a writer and a leader, also affirming his brilliance on electric and acoustic bass. He needs to be careful with his choices, though. His apparent interest in Third Stream and classical music shows a well-rounded artist, but too much of either or both is distracting at best—and downright annoying at length. ---J. Hunter, allaboutjazz.com

John Patitucci's Line by Line is mostly a quiet and thoughtful affair. The performances often feature close interplay between the bassist and guitarist Adam Rogers, with stimulating support from drummer Brian Blade and occasional guest appearances by the great tenor Chris Potter. The music is adventurous but often lyrical, with Patitucci being a key soloist but not completely dominating the performances, giving his sidemen plenty of space of their own. It is interesting to hear the mellow-toned Rogers rocking out a bit on Thelonious Monk's "Evidence." In addition to a Patitucci-Rogers duet on "Nana" and a closing solo electric bass solo on "Tone Poem," two selections add a string quartet and one has a string quintet. Of these, "Theme and Variations for 6-String Bass and Strings" is a major third stream work that reminds listeners that John Patitucci is a very skilled composer in addition to being one of jazz's finest bassists. Recommended. This CD was nominated in 2007 for a Grammy award as Best Jazz Instrumental Album (Individual or Group). ---Scott Yanow, Rovi

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