

Mp3 Alex Levin Trio - Night And Distance



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Jazz for rainy days or cozy, romantic nights. Alex Levin, one of New York City's rising jazz stars, plays sultry ballads, bossas, and swinging standards in a timeless trio, creating a soulful, relaxing mood. 7 MP3 Songs JAZZ: Bebop, POP: Delicate Details: The audience at the jazz club listened intently to the trio's final song and applauded long and loud. From behind the piano, Alex announces the band names and future gigs. "My album is coming out this month!" he exclaims. "I wanted to make an album that people would listen to and enjoy throughout the day-at dinner, while relaxing or reading, or when they were cooking." This is what Alex Levin, a New York City jazz pianist, told me when I spoke with him in New York City's East Village about his new album, Night and Distance. He certainly succeeded with his debut, a sparkling album of standards and originals. The songs all convey a sense of longing, be it for home, love, or even 'Autumn in New York.' Alex plays every other Saturday at Detour, a small jazz club in the heart of the East Village. His fans return week after week to check out the music. "I'm very happy with the way the CD turned out," he told me, sitting across from me at a table in the back corner. "It all works together to create a single, aesthetically complete experience." The CD was recorded in Brooklyn and features some of NYC's most in-demand players, including the drummers Taylor Davis and Ismail Lawal, and bassists Diallo House and Yoshi Wakti. The recording kicks off with a jaunty version of "If I Should Lose You," immediately introducing the theme of loss to the listener's imagination. The tune features burning solos by Alex and Yoshi, and a longer drum solo by Taylor over hypnotic chords. With the second tune, Alex's original "Bossa A," the same trio finds a deep groove and sticks with it. "That is one of my favorite compositions of the thirty or so I composed last year," confirmed Alex. "I was so lucky to have a chance to play it with such a great rhythm section!" "Far From the Home I Love" from Fiddler on the Roof seems an odd choice for a jazz CD, until you hear the arrangement by Alex, featuring Diallo and Ismail. "I

wanted to do something like Coltrane's 'Wise One,' and incorporate a rubato section as well as a more burning, bluesy passage," Alex explained. "It's my version of homage," he said. "I've always loved New York City in the fall!" he continues, referring to his solo piano version of "Autumn in New York." "I heard a Brubeck version of this tune when I was twelve years old in Philadelphia, and I'll never shake the mood of that recording." Alex took full advantage of the Steinway Concert Grand at Systems Two Studios on this track, finding deep resonance in the bass notes. He even surprises with a stride piano passage as well as a musical allusion to Radiohead. "I hope to record a full album of solo pieces someday. It presents the pianist with so many possibilities!" said Alex. "'But Not for Me' is one of those songs that I love to play. The lyrics are so beautiful and the melody is so pure," he told me. After Alex plays the little-known introduction to the popular standard, the trio kicks in at a swinging, comfortable tempo. "Ahmad Jamal's rhythm section played so perfectly with him. I was hoping to capture a similar magic on this track," he said. It serves as a nice intro to the second original track on the CD, Night and Distance. "One night I was up at three in the morning, and my wife was traveling abroad and I wrote this tune. It isn't too much of a sad song...more hopeful, really," Alex remembers. This is one of the CD's most personal tracks, and it wears its pop influence on its sleeve. As Alex plays in a popular New York pop band, Cicada Songs, it is no wonder that he would bring something a bit more contemporary to his recording. His composition segues nicely into the final track, Bjork's beautiful composition "New World" from the film *Dancer in the Dark*. "I love the way the melody shifts from such hopefulness to such a soulful sadness," Alex remarks. "And Ismail's drum solo is such a great ending to the album." I love the way the track fades out in its final moments. I ask Alex how that came about. He explained: "Rich Lamb, who recorded the trio, had this great idea of walking away from the sound at the end of the CD. At first I had no idea what he was talking about, but when he played me the track in its final form, I thought, 'That's it. That's what I want.'" New York has more than a few great players. Alex is a pianist with a personal style and sound that invites the listener into his world. Jazz can seem so modern and harried, so it's especially satisfying to hear a young player who reaches out to his audience and offers them his art. Enjoy his CD and catch him in New York at Detour when you have a chance! --T. L. Beddoes, New York, 2005 You can find out more about Alex at alexlevinjazz.com Detour Jazz Club info can be found at jazzatdetour.com

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