

## Mp3 Ed Spargo - Jazz: Jazz Fusion



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"Ed Spargo's CD is a joy to listen to. His contemporary compositions evoke the feeling of jazz classics... His band is first rate and Ed's bass playing is as tasteful as it gets. " - Roger Sadowsky (Sadowsky Guitars, LTD.) 8 MP3 Songs JAZZ: Jazz Fusion, JAZZ: Latin Jazz Details: ED SPARGO BIOGRAPHY Ed Spargo named his debut album Invisible Man. That was Ed's way of describing the role he's performed for much of the past 20 years - invisible, but not inaudible, supporting some of the brightest New England-based blues, jazz and roots stars. Ed's supple bass playing has been a vital part of the music of Toni Lynn Washington, Johnny A, Greg Piccolo, Michelle Willson, Bruce Katz, Julien Kasper and many others. Although Ed's bold tone and melodic style of propulsion have kept him in demand as a sideman, recording and touring the US and Europe, 1998's Invisible Man announced his skill as a composer. Versatile and exploratory, the CD traveled from jazz to pop to R&B to blues effortlessly, paralleling Ed's flexible approach on bass as well as the wide-ranging territory of his career. But Ed's new album, simply titled Ed Spargo, is more than a showcase for his abilities: it's the sound of an artist coming into his own. On Ed Spargo's eight compositions, the bass virtuoso defines his own distinctive take on classic jazz fusion. "My overall concept is to blur the lines between the three styles of music I love the most: Latin jazz, straight-ahead jazz and funk," Spargo explains. "I strive to play all three styles authentically, and they lend themselves to developing harmonic ideas and improvisation, and have very direct melodies, so there's plenty of fuel for me as a composer and performer." You may hear the influence of other great contemporary bassists like John Pattitucci, Anthony Jackson and Oscar Stagnaro (with whom Ed studied) in Ed's richly expressive playing on tunes like "To the Max" and "Visible Man," but the CD's dynamic sensibilities, melodic flights and daring interplay are all Ed's design. "When I made Invisible Man, I recorded with musicians who were my friends and who were available," he explains. "This time I built the

album around a few very deliberately chosen trios and quartets. Writing for that format allows enough space for everybody to be heard and for a lot of improvisation. "It was especially important for me to play with the same drummer, so I chose my good friend Zac Casher, who I've known since I was in high school in Rhode Island. That created a more unified sound, and since we have a common vocabulary as players, it allowed the other musicians - like Steve Hunt [who's played with Stanley Clarke and Alan Holdsworth] on piano and Dino Govoni on sax - plenty of freedom." What makes Ed Spargo different from most albums by marquee bassists is Ed's ability, based on the fundamentals he learned at Boston's Berklee College of Music, to write for every instrument, so his tunes never sound like bass calisthenics. "In funk, the bass line might be repetitive and in Latin music it might be very percussive," Ed explains, "but when you weave the harmonic structures of jazz into a composition, especially for a small group, the improvisational opportunities open up. You can really hear that on the classic albums by Miles Davis. "Improvisation is a must for me," he continues. "I might be following a specific bass line, but I always leave enough room in my writing so I can constantly improvise - which I do. My goal as a composer is to allow plenty of room for self-expression for me and for other musicians. But even when somebody else is soloing as intensely as the musicians do on my album, I like to play in a way that's close to free association, so I can let anything that comes into my head channel its way out. That's the aspect of playing jazz I love the most. I try to forget any technical stuff and really let myself open up." Spargo's next goal is to literally step out. "I've been so busy as a sideman that I've never done a gig under my own name," he says. "But now it's time for that to change. Ed Spargo is full of arrangements for trios and quartets, so all I need is three other musicians and I can take these tunes to the stage." - Ted Drozdowski

ED SPARGO ON ED SPARGO SONG BY SONG: "TO THE MAX" "This was an example of how something can sound great when you're writing in a vacuum, but be radically different when you take it to the band. I was messing around on my computer and came up with a chordal idea and developed it into a bass line and wrote the melody around it. And when I got into the studio with the band, it sounded like crap. So we deleted the bass chord thing and instead I played the melody at the beginning and doubled the piano, which was already playing the bass part as I'd written the tune, and it turned out great. I wrote this one while my wife was pregnant with our son, Max." "AGI" "I wanted to play the melody in a way that wasn't necessarily specific to bass. It's slow and slinky and has the feel of a jazz horn. Studying at Berklee, I got a real education in writing for saxophone, and if you were to take a Pattitucci solo and

transcribe it, it could be played on tenor sax and still sound great. I flipped that idea around." "VISIBLE MAN" "This is a sequel to my last CD's 'Invisible Man.' This song is a good example of what I'm aiming for. It has a jazz harmonic structure, but you're not sure if it's Latin or funk. There's also a 5/4 section in there that helps keep you guessing." "BEAUTY AND THE BEAST" "I wanted to do either a song by Wayne Shorter or Miles, and this one, by Wayne, has been in my head since high school. My arrangement has a nice half-time funk feel that's not represented elsewhere on the record. The solo section is over a one-chord vamp that I wrote to open it up and let the guys really play." "CLUMBER SLUMBER" "I wrote this song for my dog, who is a Clumber Spaniel, so I wanted it to be energetic and there's a little part in the middle I conceived as a dream section. It's more Latin than funk, with jazz harmonies, but you couldn't really call it a bossa nova." "TINA'S TUNE" "This song was written as a wedding present for my wife. Every bass player at some point screws around with open E and open A strings. Jaco's famous song 'Continuum' does that. This is my variation on those bass themes. I sustain the open E and A and play above them. John LaMoia, who plays percussion on it, was one of the guys in my wedding party. He also produced Invisible Man." "CADDY" "I originally recorded this when I was in the Heavy Metal Horns. Now it's got a more stripped-down arrangement and I play the melody. It was written about my late boxer - a dog again - and this version's more funky. In the original version sax took the lead." "PARTIDO NOVA" "This song was on the first album and had the feel of a partido alto, then it went into a bossa nova. But this time it's pure partido alto. I played fretless bass, performing what was originally written as a flute melody, and I had a friend who's a great singer, Tricia Kelly, double it up, although it's not a vocal tune per se." - As told to Ted Drozdowski

PERSONNEL: Ed Spargo - Electric Bass (all tracks) Steve Hunt - Piano and Rhodes (4 tracks) Brad Hatfield - Piano (2 tracks) Matt Jensen - Piano (1 track) Dino Govoni - Tenor Sax (4 tracks) Zac Casher - Drums (7 tracks) John LaMoia - Percussion (1 track) Tricia Kelly - Vocals (1 track) Produced by: Ed Spargo Co-Produced by: Dan Tarlow Recorded by: Dan Tarlow Zigmo Recording, Danvers, MA Wellspring Sound, Acton, MA Mixed by: Todd Winmill Futura Productions, Roslindale, MA Mastered by: Colin Sapp Specialized Mastering, Framingham, MA Art Design by: Todd Winmill Photos by: Pia Schachter

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