

Mp3 Vic Juris - Blue Horizon



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Contemporary New York small group jazz featuring electric, steel string and nylon string acoustic guitar

13 MP3 Songs JAZZ: Smooth Jazz, JAZZ: Jazz Fusion Details: A chopsmeister of the highest order whose formidable post-bop facility has graced a slew of recordings since the mid '70s, Vic Juris ranks right up there alongside the Pat Methenys, John Scofields, John Abercrombies and Bill Frisells of the jazz guitar world. And while his flowing, warm-toned lyricism and urge to swing have been documented on several albums as a leader for the Muse and SteepleChase labels as well as on a dozen or so recordings over the past decade as a member of the Dave Liebman Group, Juris reveals a very different side of himself on Blue Horizon. "I feel like it's my Sgt. Pepper's," laughs the New Jersey native who turned 50 last September. "As strange as that may sound, when I heard the whole thing back I thought, 'This finally sounds like the record I've always wanted to make.'" A stylistically diverse collection of original material that has the guitarist switching axes from electric to steel string acoustic and nylon string acoustic, Blue Horizon is perhaps the first recording in Vic's career where he had the luxury of time in the studio to explore concepts of texture, timbre and layering on his own compositions. The result is a thoughtfully constructed package that runs the gamut from the translucent, Metheny-ish opener "Dancing Shadows" to the briskly swinging "Labyrinth," from the sensuous acoustic ballad "Soft Spoken" to the sinister, urgently slamming "Kling On" to the depthful ode "The Spanish Horse," dedicated to the late and renowned flamenco singer Cameron. Along with the album's lone uptempo burner "889," the luminous acoustic guitar-marimba-vibes ballad "I've Heard That Song Before" and the alluring title track, Juris also performs a series of brief duet interludes with his three main collaborators on this fully realized project -- drummer Adam Nussbaum, vibist Joe Locke and bassist Jay Anderson, who also produced and engineered the entire session at Mountain Rest, his newly-built studio housed in a reconverted barn on

his property in New Paltz, New York. "This whole project started with Jay inviting me up to check out his new studio," explains Vic. "I brought along some guitars and the first thing we did together was the acoustic piece 'The Spanish Horse.' And from there Jay said, 'Let's make this a Vic Juris project,' which sounded great to me." Following that initial encounter in the studio, Anderson and Juris brought in Nussbaum and Locke for a couple of more days of recording. Jamey Haddad came in later to overdub his percussion parts on various tunes (including his percussive tour-de-force on "Sunset on Vega") while Kate Baker added the ethereal wordless vocals on "Dancing Shadows." Rather than trying to hastily cram a string of first-takes into a single day of recording in the studio (often the norm on jazz dates with a limited budget), Juris and Anderson fashioned the pieces on Blue Horizon over time with a more ambitious and deliberate approach. As Vic explains, "Jay engineered and played at the same time, which was quite a trick. But he also spent a lot of time in post-production with editing, fading and mixing everything. So we actually built the whole thing up gradually by layering tracks, which for me was the first time as a leader where I actually was able to work like that." Juris' guitar sounds are sparkling throughout, whether he's carrying the melody upfront with nylon string, as on the aptly-named "Soft Spoken," "The Spanish Horse" or the hauntingly beautiful "Sunset on Vega," comping urgently on steel string, as on the frantic "Gojo Duo" with vibist Locke, swinging with warm-toned fluency on electric, as on "Labyrinth," "Uphill," the buoyantly swinging title track and "889," or skronking with raucous abandon, as on the dissonant "Domo Duo" with Nussbaum. As far as the unique vibes-guitar blend heard throughout Blue Horizon, Juris says, "I was really into the Gary Burton quartet in the '70s with Larry Coryell and Jerry Hahn. I really loved those records like Duster and Live at Carnegie Hall and I think you can hear that influence here in what Joe and I play together. Vibes and guitar have a definite sound together but I also liked the idea of the marimba with acoustic guitar, which is a timbre that you don't hear very often in jazz." Although Juris has known drummer Nussbaum since the 1970s, Blue Horizon marks the first time that they have ever recorded together. "I thought that Adam's overall jazz sense added a lot to this record," says Vic. "I really wanted this stuff to swing and he brought that element. He just knows how to propel the music with that jazzy undercurrent, even when the writing has more of a European type thing." Haddad was an obvious choice for the sessions. Juris has played alongside the talented percussionist (who in recent years has played in Paul Simon's band) in Dave Liebman's band for the last 11 years. On the extended intro to "Sunset on Vega," Haddad creates an incredibly dense polyrhythmic percussion choir

through overdubbing. "These guys all gave me a lot of input and suggestions," Juris says of his colleagues on Blue Horizon. "I know it's my record but it feels like it was really a cooperative effort. I didn't feel like it was just a session where you show up and get the bread and split. Plus, I've been friends with these guys for 20-25 years, so that helps a lot too." Vic's Sgt. Pepper's? Perhaps. "Well, maybe not that deep," he laughs, "but I hope it sells as well." -- Bill Milkowski Recorded in 2002/3 at Mountain Rest Studios, New Paltz, NY. Producer engineer : Jay Anderson. Photography : Marcelo Coelho (cover), Andrew Lepley. Package Design : 27.12 Design Ltd. 2712design.com. Executive producer : Joachim Becker.

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