



OUR COUNT OF JAZZ

He has always looked out at the Atlantic because he prefers the open sea to the limited views inland. His name doesn't appear in the annals of Galician Jazz, although he has been one of the pioneers of modern Spanish Jazz. Today he is also undertaking an important academic task as a professor teaching Jazz in La Coruña's music college, which means that he is also contributing to the future of the genre as well.

Alberto Conde is a pianist who is key to understanding music in our country although to him it is clear that he has always been a loner. Every summer he can be seen at all of Vigo's *Imaxina sons* festivals whether he is playing or not because his passion for Jazz is evident just hearing him talk about it.

The pianist greets us evening after evening with new ideas and new challenges, slowly but surely, as this composer and performer handles concepts which are totally distanced from the norms dictated by the Jazz industry. Now after five years of record making silence Alberto Conde has returned to our jazz covers with the prolongation of his **Atlantic Trio Project** via the *Villa Lobos A New Way* (Karonte) album, a Jazzy pianistic homage to the great Brazilian composer.

To give life and a voice to the pianist's new Project, the artist counted on his faithful escorts *Kin Garcia* (double bass) and *Miguel Cabana* (drums), as well as special guests; the soprano Carmen Durán and the percussionist Nirankar Khalsa, the lyrics are by J.R, Bustamante the Brazilian poet and musicologist who never doubted whether to collaborate hand in hand with Conde on this project. There is very little of the fabulous 2,008 *Atlantic Bridge*, only the same desire and faculty to surprise.

“The Villa Lobos composition is rich and versatile in every aspect and genre” comments the pianist, “from the first instance it made us bravely confront the challenge of exploring the immense interpretative possibilities of its best themes and variations with a completely new creative process.” And so it happened that Conde took such a time-worn repertoire such as *Villa Lobos* and has turned it around, through the straight and narrow, creating new harmonies to dress such a famous piece of music, giving it an Amazonian flavour with the vocal contribution of Carmen Durán transmuting it luckily it into Marlui Miranda. The contributions of the soprano are convincing from the start with *Xangó* and *Prelude no 5* with the rich rhythmic contextualization added by Khalsa, and then to go on to make total music recreating in Villa Lobo’s most famous piece, including *Aria Cantinela* of the *Brasileiras Bachianas no 5* to the package. But the recording wouldn’t be definitive without some original inspirations, for which the pianist adds four of his own compositions, *Fuga Vals*, *On the other side*, *Murmúrio* and *Ayahuasca*.

Along general lines and independently from the material cooking, there is a clear interpretative and conceptual stability in the whole album, a horse among the jazzy improvisation, classical and folk music. It is precisely there, in the balance of expressive coherence and creativity that Alberto Conde’s new project shows us his validity and worth. It has already been said that the pianist only appears in our lives when he has something interesting to say.

The first great news we had of him arrived in the mid 80’s when he won second place in the competition which was then organised by the San Sebastian Jazz festival. It was the era of his first group The Baio Ensemble which was then followed by the Alberto Conde Group and the Alberto Conde Trio with whom he signed up for three notable recordings *A Lagoa dos Atlantes*, *Celtrópolis*, *Entremares* and *Andaina*. Now in the present decade he frees his creativity with the afore mentioned Atlantic Trio which is a derivation of the Atlantic Bridge recording, which was conceived with the North American guitarist Steve Brown. Since then he has understood jazz through this Atlantic view point which took him as much to New York and New Orleans as to La Habana and Rio de Janeiro, using the language of bebop as his musical mortar.

The modern history of Galician Jazz has Clunia, that visionary trio formed by Nani García Baldo Martínez y Fernando Llorca on its first pages, but Alberto Conde has been claiming the same sort of recognition for some time now, for his own reasons, without wild gesticulations alone. His résumé includes illustrious collaborations which have materialized alongside the renowned Scott Hamilton, Kenny Wheeler or Roy Hargrove, although his story begins inside himself, sitting looking out at the Atlantic from his present residence in Vigo, looking at the musical waves in which he will swim tomorrow.