



PRESS RELEASE



RATKO ZJACA NOW & THEN - A PORTRAIT

IOR CD 77110-2



1. Out Of Body
2. Why We Are Here
3. The New Life
4. Welcome To Our Jungle
5. Great Ocean Road

6. Kandinsky Night
7. Then and Now
8. Katarina
9. A Friend For Life
10. The Gate

Ratko Zjaca
with
Miroslav Vitous, John Patitucci,
Reggie Workman, Steve Gadd,
Al Foster, Randy Brecker,

Simone Zanchini, Adam Nussbaum
Stan Mitrovic, Martin Gjakonovski
Bart Platteau, Ben Schröder

RATKO ZJACA NOW & THEN - A PORTRAIT (In+Out Records /in-akustik)

Sometimes he likes to call his music "Fellini Jazz". He brings Mediterranean flair to the epicentre of American jazz. He explores classical music and influences from India and the Far East and combines "folklore imaginaire" with free forms of expression. Ratko Zjaca is a bridge-builder par excellence who keeps on delving his pillars into new waters. IN+OUT Records releases a portrait of this exceptional Croatian guitarist which presents the different facets of his career, with ten pieces of music spanning ten years and featuring him in a variety of line-ups.

Zjaca studied classical music in Zagreb, then plunged into modern idioms at Rotterdam and at the New York University School of Music. He started to attend master classes given by the likes of Pat Metheny, Mike Stern, Bob Brookmeyer, Joe Pass and Jim Hall. The last two in particular left their mark on his playing which has always been orientated towards the USA. Among the first musicians to appreciate his remarkable string wizardry were bassist Reggie Workman and drummer Al Foster. Ratko teamed up with these two in New York in 2000 for an intimate and intense trio experience, captured on the album "A Day In Manhattan". You can listen to this early experimental period in two outtakes: "Out Of Body" starts with a sleep-walking, elegant dance on the strings whereas "Why We Are Here" heats up with inspiring modern jazz phrases, including some short solo work by Zjaca's partners.

Six years later the Croatian can be found playing with a quartet. Joining Zjaca and Al Foster is one of Ratko's east coast heroes, bassist John Patitucci, and a lyrical counterpoint, saxophonist Stan Mitrovic. "A most enjoyable listening experience" – that's how John

Abercrombie described Ratko's 1960 album, "Crossing The Border", and he was certainly not the only enthusiast. Two tracks from this album – "Welcome To The Jungle" and "Great Ocean Road" – amaze the listener in totally different ways, one with a dense, aesthetic combination of modern idioms, and the other with ballad-like, almost folksy and dreamy duo between the Zjaca and Mitrovic. In a similar line-up Zjaca presented himself on his IN+OUT debut album, "Continental Talk", with Randy Brecker – another of Zjaca's prominent heroes – and Steve Gadd replacing Foster. The recordings, made in 2008 and represented here by "The New Life" and "The Game", show an increasingly inspired Zjaca producing a melodious flow and even using a little Latin flair in the arrangements. "This is my dream team", Zjaca said about the quintet, which he felt created an "organic symbiosis" during the sessions.



Eventually, in 2010, Zjaca returned to Europe. On "The Way We Talk", which came into being at the Klangstudio Leyh in Mannheim, we hear Ratko Zjaca side by side with his new studio and stage partner, Simone Zanchini, probably the most daring accordionist that Italy has produced. Completing the band is Macedonian bass player Martin Gjakonovski, and – to cast the anchor in the New World – drummer Adam Nussbaum joins. The musical language is, at the same time, more Mediterranean, thanks to Zanchini's effective escapades – and more experimental, bearing witness to stylistic boundary-crossing. This can be heard in the nervous and somewhat eccentric "Kandinsky Night", and also in the cantable, melancholy "A Friend For Life". This release is full of cinematic character, full of "Fellini-esque traits indeed.

Last but not least, "Now And Then" offers two previously unreleased tracks: In "Katarina" you will hear a Rotterdam snapshot of 2003, in which Zjaca and Mitrovic mix minimalistic loop philosophy and vocal lines from the Balkans via multi-tracking.

And in the epic "Then And Now" you will get an impression of the quality of Zjaca's live playing. On this 11-minute track, he is accompanied by Miroslav Vitous (b), Bart Platteau (fl) and Ben Schröder (dr), and he combines a lyrical, impressionistic tableau with complex rhythmic patterns.

"Now And Then" presents a thrilling overview of the sound aesthetics created by this extraordinary Croatian string wizard.



Also available on IN + OUT Records:



RATKO ZJACA
CONTINENTAL TALK
IOR CD 77097-2



RATKO ZJACA - SIMONE ZANCHINI
THE WAY WE TALK
IOR CD 77104-2

