

Altin Sencalar

Introducing Altin Sencalar

Introducing Altin Sencalar is the recording debut as a leader of an impressive young trombonist. Altin Sencalar. Based in Austin, Texas, Sencalar has already gained a wide variety of musical experiences and developed an original style on trombone.

On this enjoyable CD, Sencalar plays trombone and occasionally euphonium, contributing seven originals and also playing fresh versions of two standards. His group is filled with up-and-coming players. Pianist Ross Margitza, bassist Alex Browne and drummer Daniel Dufour form a solid and consistently creative rhythm section while there are guest appearances by altoist Gerald Martinez, tenor-saxophonist Matt Maldonado and (on one selection apiece) David Young and Justin Smith on trumpet.

The set begins with "Melody In My Head," a relaxed medium-tempo ballad that serves as a fine introduction to Altin Sencalar. Showcased with the quartet, he displays a personal tone, inventive ideas, and shows that he is not shy to show emotion in his playing. "There's Something About It" is a cheerful and catchy melody that inspires strong solos from Sencalar, tenor-saxophonist Maldonado and bassist Browne; there is also a tradeoff with drummer Dufour. The blend between the trombonist and altoist Martinez on the pretty ballad "Distance Between Us" is memorable and the leader takes a fine cadenza at its conclusion.

The standard "What Is This Thing Called Love" swings hard and features Altin Sencalar's quick thinking on some uptempo bebop. Lee Morgan's "Ceora" has rarely if ever been performed by a euphonium player but Sencalar sounds very much at home, taking a surprising double-time chorus during a performance that also finds Martinez creating a bluish solo.

The modern and melancholy "This One Is Mine" precedes the joyful "I Got What I Wanted" which has some excellent playing by trumpeter David Young. The funky "It's 2 a.m." and the swinging minor-toned blues "My Last Sentiment" conclude the enjoyable CD.

Introducing Altin Sencalar lets one know that there is a talented new trombonist-composer on the jazz scene of Texas, one whose music deserves to be discovered and enjoyed.

-Scott Yanow, jazz journalist/historian and author of 11 books including *Bebop, Jazz On Film and Jazz On Record 1917-76*