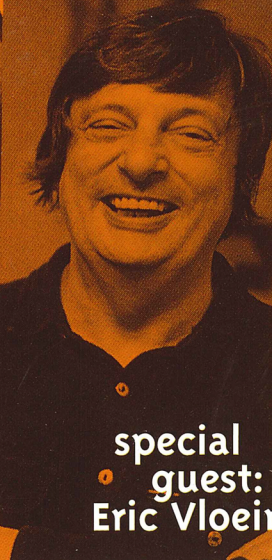
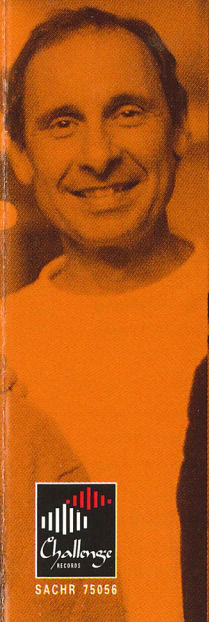


ALONE TOGETHER

ENRICO PIERANUNZI QUARTET

Enrico Pieranunzi Philip Catherine
Hein Van de Geyn Joe LaBarbera



SACR 75056

special
guest:
Eric Vloeimans

Although creative music fans from the United States are fond of calling jazz "America's true art form," the music has been international since at least 1919 when the Original Dixieland Jazz Band caused a sensation during their tour of England. There have been a countless number of top European jazz musicians since that time with guitarist Django Reinhardt in the 1930s (along with violinist Stephane Grappelli) emerging as probably the first European jazz innovator.

Listening to the music on Playing Standards without knowing the identities of the players, one would be hard pressed to guess which of these musicians is American (just drummer Joe LaBarbera), proving that jazz can develop to a high level at any place where its recordings and performers have visited. Enrico Pieranunzi has long been recognized as one of Italy's finest jazz musicians, a brilliant modern mainstream stylist who has his own slant on performing straightahead jazz. Although there are times in his playing that one can hear bits of Bill Evans and McCoy Tyner, it is clear when listening to these consistently unpredictable improvisations that Pieranunzi has his own sound.

Born in 1949, Pieranunzi began studying piano when he was five, inspired by his father, a guitarist who loved jazz. He became a professional musician when he was 19, working with trombonist Marcello Rosa's quartet for a time.

The pianist began leading his own trios in 1975, also playing with the Space Jazz Trio which he co-led with bassist Enzo Pietropaoli. Although he has had a diverse career, being a professor at the Frosinone Conservatory of Music in Rome since 1972, working as a studio musician and also occasionally being employed as a chamber music soloist, Pieranunzi's main focus has always been his work in jazz. In addition to leading his own groups, the pianist has long been in-demand for work with many top European and

American musicians when they pass through Italy. Through the years he has uplifted the music of such notables as trumpeters Chet Baker, Franco Ambrosetti, Benny Bailey, Art Farmer and Enrico Rava, trombonists Curtis Fuller and Kai Winding, clarinetist Tony Scott, tenors Johnny Griffin and Sal Nistico, altoists Lee Konitz and Phil Woods, guitarist Jim Hall, bassist Charlie Haden and drummers Kenny Clarke and Art Taylor among many others, recording with Baker, Farmer, Haden, Konitz, Rava and Woods. Since 1980's Isis, as a leader Pieranunzi has headed at least a dozen albums (not counting two with the Space Jazz Trio) prior to recording Playing Standards.

For his latest effort, Pieranunzi is joined by four very talented sidemen, each of whom are quite capable of being leaders. Guitarist Philip Catherine was born in wartime London (on Oct. 27, 1942) to a Belgian father and an English mother. After World War II ended, he moved with his family to Brussels where he took up the guitar, playing professionally from the age of 17. When he began to gain early recognition, Catherine was dubbed a "Young Django" due to the influence of Reinhardt, but he defied expectations (as Bireli Lagrene would 20 years later) by playing in rock-oriented fusion bands and showing the inspiration of John McLaughlin. Since his period of teaming up with French violinist Jean-Luc Ponty (1970-72), Catherine has performed a wide variety of music ranging from fusion to hard bop including with bassist Niels-Henning Orsted Pedersen (they had a duet for a time), Charles Mingus, Stephane Grappelli, Chet Baker and guitar duets with Larry Coryell.

Bassist Hein Van de Geyn has worked on and off with Pieranunzi for several years. Among his more notable credits have been associations with Chet Baker, Lee Konitz, harmonica wizard Toots Thielemans, pianist Larry Vuckovich, singer Dee Dee Bridgewater (in

the early 1990s), tenor-saxophonist Rick Margitza and Philip Catherine.

Drummer Joe LaBarbera will probably always be most famous for being a member of pianist Bill Evans' final trio (along with bassist Marc Johnson) during 1979-80. Since then he has mostly been based in the Los Angeles area where his sensitive and subtle playing has accompanied a countless number of jazz musicians and singers; he is never short for work! Three songs add the mellow sound of Eric Vloeimans, a young trumpeter from Holland who has led three albums of his own thus far for the Challenge label.

For this project, Enrico Pieranunzi, although a talented composer, decided to interpret a dozen well-known jazz standards. However, as is true of all top jazz improvisers, Pieranunzi's renditions of these familiar tunes are quite fresh and inventive, with little unexpected changes here and there, along with many subtle surprises. The pianist always keeps the melody in mind, even when a song is reharmonized, and he proves to be quite unselfish in sharing the spotlight with his sidemen, most notably Philip Catherine.

This is especially true on the opening "Speak Low," where the guitarist has the majority of the solo space although Pieranunzi's accompaniment is inspiring. "My Foolish Heart," which is usually played as a slow ballad, is instead taken at a likable medium-tempo pace. As is true on many of the selections, Pieranunzi and Catherine (who have very complementary styles) split the melody and create solos that build naturally from each other's statements; Van de Geyn also makes a strong impression during his brief spot.

"What Is This Thing Called Love" introduces Eric Vloeimans' trumpet (hinting at Miles Davis) in an abstract duet with Pieranunzi before they cook with the quartet; Catherine sits this tune out. The guitarist is quite prominent on a jazz waltz version of "Sweet And Lovely,"

showing off his expertise with octaves (a la Wes Montgomery). "You've Changed" has Catherine, Pieranunzi and Van de Geyn all taking turns on the opening theme, pointing out the fact that this project is much less about individual heroics as it is about achieving a very appealing group sound and bringing out the beauty of these vintage melodies.

On a cooking version of "Just One Of Those Things," Catherine displays his roots in Django Reinhardt in a few spots. And, even at this fast tempo, Pieranunzi and Catherine trade off constantly, working very close while pushed by Van de Geyn and the subtle LaBarbera. "Alone Together," which has the full quintet, is a fine feature for Vloeimans, who shows a lot of individuality in his solo. One of the main highlights of this release is this version of "Tenderly," an exquisite and thoughtful piano-guitar duet. "How Deep Is The Ocean" has particularly strong solos by Pieranunzi and Catherine (listen to how the guitarist builds up his improvisation) and a few heated drum breaks by LaBarbera. Vloeimans makes a lyrical statement on "You Don't Know What Love Is" while the trumpet-less quartet romps through "I Didn't Know What Time It Was." For a surprise, "Moonglow" serves as a mellow closer to this well-conceived program. Throughout *Playing Standards*, Enrico Pieranunzi, Philip Catherine, Hein Van de Geyn, Joe LaBarbera and Eric Vloeimans show that the most inventive jazz players have no real difficulty working musical magic on even the most familiar songs. The dozen tunes are made new again and the result is a very enjoyable outing that is both creative and accessible.

Scott Yanow

Author of Swing, Bebop and Afro-Cuban Jazz

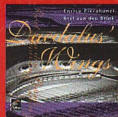
(all three books are published by Miller Freeman)



ENRICO PIERANUNZI QUARTET

Enrico Pieranunzi ^{piano,} Philip Catherine ^{guitar,}
Hein Van de Geyn ^{bass,}
Joe LaBarbera ^{drums}

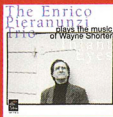
special
guest:
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CHR 70069
Daedalus
Enrico Pieranunzi /
Bert van den Brink



CHR 70065
*Don't Forget the
Poet*
Enrico Pieranunzi
Quintet



CHR 70083
*Plays the music
of Wayne Shorter*
The Enrico
Pieranunzi Trio



CHR 70084
*Improvised Forms
For Trio*
Enrico Pieranunzi



recorded on March 8-9-10, 2000
at Studio LeRoy, Amsterdam by Chris Weeda
mixed at Studio LeRoy, Amsterdam by Chris Weeda
mastered at Baseline Studio, Dordrecht
by Chris Weeda and Hein Van de Geyn
produced by Hein Van de Geyn
photography by Joost Leijen
art direction/design by Dolphin Design
production coordination by Colette Pannemans



- 1 Speak Low 5:17
- 2 My Foolish Heart 6:03
- 3 What Is This Thing Called Love* 4:34
- 4 Sweet And Lovely 3:36
- 5 You've Changed 5:12
- 6 Just One Of Those Things 4:12
- 7 Alone Together* 4:31
- 8 Tenderly 5:19
- 9 How Deep Is The Ocean 5:26
- 10 You Don't Know What Love Is* 6:01
- 11 I Didn't Know What Time It Was 4:27
- 12 Moonglow 4:35

total time: 59:20

