

Andre Ceccarelli Trio - Avenue des Diables Blues (2005)

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1 *Nardis* 5:09 2 *Sophisticated Lady* 7:01 3 *Summertime (Tribute To Mr. Jimmy Smith)* 6:53 4 *Prélude* 1:49 5 *April In Paris* 5:33 6 *3 Views Of A Secret* 7:30 7 *Avenue Des Diables Blues* 4:35 8 *La Vie En Rose* 5:36 9 *Sunrise* 6:07 10 *The Song Is You* 6:48
André Ceccarelli - drums Bireli Lagrène - guitar Joey DeFrancesco - organ, Hammond B3

The French can swing hard. Let Andre Ceccarelli's 2005 release *Avenue des Diables Blues* be evidence of this. Frenchmen drummer Ceccarelli and guitarist Bireli Lagrene along with Joey DeFrancesco on Hammond organ display fine technique and wisely executed playing all throughout this Parisian release.

"Nardis" leads off with a bang and wandering time before snapping into the melody. The band explores different feels as they feel appropriate, which becomes somewhat of a theme for the whole album. Nothing feels out-of-bounds for the trio as they slip comfortably into double-times and loose Afro-Cuban grooves.

DeFrancesco gives his tribute to one of his biggest influences, Jimmy Smith, with his unadulterated yet imaginative take on "Summertime." Ceccarelli maintains a nice foundation with brushes, but his switch to sticks brings out a new fire in Lagrene's solo. The tune shuffles right into the organ solo, in which DeFrancesco draws obvious inspiration from Smith while still pulling from his own unique vocabulary.

While Ceccarelli sounds great at all times on the record, the lack of solo time is noticeable. He shines on one chorus in "Nardis" and a sub-2 minute solo entitled "Prelude." The listener is sometimes even teased with what seems like the beginning of a feature for the drummer but

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quickly fades into a band mate's solo. Nonetheless, the time he does have to speak is filled with thoughtful phrases, technically impressive rhythmic motives, and clear emotional presence. It is on the bright closer, "The Song Is You," that he trades solos with the band and sounds his best, fusing flashes of hand speed with palette-cleansing moments of slower rhythms and cymbals.

Beautiful presentations of Norah Jones' "Sunrise" and Jaco Pastorius' "3 Views of a Secret" join the program of standards and a lone Ceccarelli original, "Avenue des Diables Blues" (co-written by Eric Legnini).

The album feels like a live set at a club, showcasing a steamy performance by three men with a lot to say. Unfortunately, the energy of what might be a three-hour set is compressed into 57 minutes, which at some times leads to overwhelmingly busy solos. Regardless, the way the trio responds to each other's high level of energy is very impressive. ---Dean Christesen, allaboutjazz.com

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