

Melomatic Orchestra's New Release From ZMI Records

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-- New release from Finish jazz quintet
Melomatic Orchestra on ZMI Records
([Ingrooves](#) / [Universal](#)).

Melomatic Orchestra's sound is lush, melodic, and evocative of the Miles Davis Quintet from the mid/late 60s and features the exact same instrumental lineup (trumpet, tenor saxophone, piano, bass, and drums).

This album is not a platform for virtuoso solo performances, like many modern jazz albums, instead, it is a refreshing reprise of a time period in jazz where the strength of the compositions, combined with the joyful interplay of the musicians, creates a sonic experience that pushes into your consciousness in a moving and memorable way.

The first cut called "Paris" is perfectly representative of the foregoing statements about the group's music. This is a powerful composition that starts off very slowly with ringing bells in the distance and then builds and builds to an emotional crescendo.

"Slowdown", is precisely like its name suggests, a down-tempo pensive mood piece that features excellent solos by Rintala, Slotte and Wingren and ending with their trademark ensemble sound.

The slow blues/funk groove called "Melomatic" is unlike the music on the rest of the album. It is at a rather deliberate pace, and features a beautiful trumpet solo by Slotte.



Melomatic Orchestra 2023 Release (ZMI Records)

The tune "Epicure" continues in the relaxed groove established in the previous cut but mixes up the pace and structure a bit by speeding up, slowing down, and moving it around. You can tell they are having a good time as a "connected" team of musicians who love what they do.

"Hypochondriac" puts front and center that strong ensemble playing of Rintala and Slotte, supported by the always tasty and never intrusive rhythm team of Johnny Åman (bass) and Erik Lillkung (drums). Aman and Lillkung sound so good together that you could imagine them being one of the most sought-after rhythm sections in the jazz .

If you wondered whether or not they would ever provide a vehicle to feature the amazing chops of pianist, Patrick Wingren, then look no further than the slow and sublime "Blackbird's Eyes". Wingren sounds like he went to school with the greats of jazz piano like Bill Evans or Duke Ellington. He plays just enough notes to carry the listener but not too many to sound like he is trying to separate himself from his fellow players.

The track, "Epiphany", starts off with a beautiful pizzicato statement from bassist, Johnny Åman, and he is slowly joined by Lillkung and then Wingren, as the piece evolves into a warm and memorable melody that takes the listener into a happy place.

For serious jazz lovers, the cut entitled "Pace" reminds one of Pat Metheny's approach to composition wherein the piece starts off with a strong rhythmic pace, but with a simple time and melody signature, continuing to evolve in complexity and intensity until the group is literally on fire two-thirds of the way through the cut, and then taking it down in volume, and intensity to a more spare and thoughtful ending. I loved it!

"Aladdin", brings all the strengths of Melomatic Orchestra into this capstone tune! It features a crisply paced time signature and memorable solos from Slotte on trumpet followed by Rintala on soprano sax. Wingren mixes things up by switching to an electric piano for this piece. Again, as always, the emphasis throughout is the composition itself remains the priority for this Finnish jazz ensemble from whom we hope to hear much more in the future!

- Review by Ken Kingery, courtesy of ZMI Records.

Melomatic Orchestra is: Rickard Slotte (trumpet and flugelhorn), Jonas Rintala (saxophone), Patrick Wingren (piano), Johnny Åman (bass) and Erik Lillkung (drums).

Album cover photograph by Carlos York.

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