

Forming an orchestra with some of the great musicians I have collaborated with over the years is an idea that I've had for many years, with musicians such as Gary Smulyan and Alex Sipiagin, who have guested with the Tankio band and other groups. Then in 2003, at the Stresa Jazz Festival, I put together the Tankio Band New York Special Edition, with Jack Whalrath and Alex Sipiagin on trumpet, Ray Anderson on trombone, Bob Stewart playing tuba, Steve Slagle, Lou Marini and Gary Smulyan on sax, Fima Ephron on bass, and Danny Gottlieb on drums. As well as being a great event, it was a stimulus to continue in this direction.

Then in recent years, with the Tankio band, I have worked with the great saxophonist Dave Binney. I also played with the wonderful trombonist Andy Hunter with the Quintette, along with Andy Gravish, Paolino Della Porta and Manhu Roche.

From these collaborations the idea of forming a new ensemble in New York was born, playing my original compositions and arrangements custom-written for this project. The ensemble is made up of talented musicians who have played with me on numerous occasions: Gary Smulyan, Alex Sipiagin, Dave Binney and Andy Hunter. Add to these two great musicians. Antonio Sanchez and Essiet Essiet, with their great competence and sensitivity, and the group was complete.

These musicians know my music intimately, are able to interpret it naturally and creatively, making it their own.

Playing at the 55 Bar and recording at System Two, with the great Mike Marciano, proved to be one the most exciting and emotional experiences imaginable! Words fail me to thank these marvellous musicians, who immersed themselves in my work with passion and commitment. It is due to their inestimable talent that this project was possible.

It is quite rare for a European musician to manage to get an orchestral project off the ground in New York; the organizational difficulties and logistics are quite considerable. For this I would like to thank Alex Sipiagin and Andy Hunter, in particular, for their support. I would also like to thank the staff

of System Two, Mike and Joseph Marciano and Nancy, for their professionalism and warmth. It was fantastic to work with them again, this being the first time since my recording with the New York Quintette. I wrote the music for this project with the musicians in mind, and for this reason it was a highly emotional experience, providing them material which they could be at ease with, and interpret in the best possible way. Their incredible contributions were a wonder to me!

I would like to thank Dario Rosciglione, Luciano Linci and the staff of Alice records for their support in the production of this album. I would also like to give a big thank you to the great artist Mark Kostabi, who offered his beautiful painting "Inner Music (Sitting in a Song)" for the cover of the CD.

I must also thank the staff of the 55 Bar in new York, as well as , Brunella De Socio, Claudio Corvini, Giancarlo Ciminelli, Massimo Pirone, Roberto Pecorelli, Sandro Satta, Torquato Sdrucia, Michel Audisso, Steve Cantarano, John Arnold, Davide Pettirossi and Pietro Iodice, who have supported and contributed to many projects over the years.

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