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Interview with Roberto Zanetti: Both intellect and soul are part of the musician's personality: Video, new CD cover



Interview with Jazz pianist and composer Roberto Zanetti.

An interview by email in writing.

JazzBluesNews.com: – First, let's start out with where you grew up, and what got you interested in music. How exactly did your adventure take off?

Roberto Zanetti: – I grew up on Lake Garda in the province of Verona (Italy).

I began my adventurous musical journey in 1975 playing electric guitar in basements with friends. The genre I was playing was mainly blues, performed without any theoretical or theoretical knowledge.

After a few years I wanted to learn about music so I enrolled in the Verona Conservatory of Music where I earned a diploma in choral composition and choir conducting. It was in this environment that I realized that with study and sacrifice my passion could become my profession.

JBN: – How has your sound evolved over time? What have you been doing to find and develop your own sound?

RZ: – By studying classical music, I was able to deal with harmony and counterpoint, which served me well in my study of African American music and the development of my own compositions.



These two components allowed me to develop my own pronunciation and sound.

JBN: – What routine practices or exercises have you developed to maintain and improve your current musical proficiency, in terms of both rhythm and harmony?

RZ: – Study, study. Study. Every musician after years in the profession finds his own line and method. Definitely regular study is very important.

JBN: – Have you changed through the years? Any changes or overall evolution? And if so why?

RZ: – Changing over the years is a natural process; in my training I have studied the various genres of African-American music from both technical and cultural aspects. But the blues and bebop tradition is the one that fascinates me the most both in form but also as a way of life.

JBN: – How do you prepare for your recordings and performances to help you maintain both spiritual and musical stamina?

RZ: – In my recordings only the form and specials respect what was established in rehearsal. I feel the music as a spiritual journey, the mood and sound must be extemporaneous. In some takes there are dissonances that could be corrected in mixing but I always choose to leave them because these dissonances make the music truly alive and authentic.

JBN: – What do you love most about your new album 2023: Roberto Zanetti Quartet- Bud's Power, how it was formed and what you are working on today.

RZ: – Before recording the record I listened extensively to Bud Powell's discography and delved into his troubled life.

The set list I chose are songs where I am comfortable and comfortable both as time and melos.

I am currently working on songs that I wrote during the lockdown and would like to record them by the end of the year.



JBN: – How did you select the musicians who play on the album?

RZ: – The musicians who played on the record are first and foremost friends with whom I shared many years of concerts and daily life experiences. Only young Martino De Franceschi Nicolò Sordo voice acting in the first take “Elettroshock” and my son Matteo on cello in the last take “Come close to me” inserted themselves for the recording.

JBN: – Can you share any memories from gigs, jams, open acts and studio sessions over the years?

RZ: – I have so many memories and emotions over many years in the profession, one particular memory is of a concert with St eve Pots who played without any warning with two saxophones at the same time. It was the first time I heard and saw something like that.

JBN: – In your opinion, what’s the balance in music between intellect and soul?

RZ: – Both intellect and soul are part of the musician’s

personality so they must be in symbiosis so good music will be created.

JBN: – There’s a two-way relationship between audience and artist; are you okay with delivering people the emotion they long for?

RZ: – So many times I had to play music that the audience asked for, this is also part of the job, important is to convey an emotion and a thought that the listener will take with them after the concert is over.

JBN: – How can we get young people interested in jazz when most of standard tunes are half a century old?

RZ: – I think the problem is not how old the standards are but with what intention they are performed. From the bebop era to today the language of African American music has evolved enriching new musical styles. The vast majority of young people grew up with different rhythmic beats of jazz so to approach young people you have to find a key and a meeting point with simpler improvisations.

JBN: – John Coltrane once said that music was his spirit. How do you perceive the spirit and the meaning of life?

RZ: – African American music is by nature a music of faith and spirituality, when I listen to musicians like Coltrane I hear not only the sound but also a prayer to the supreme self.

JBN: – If you could change one single thing in the musical world and that would become reality, what would that be?

RZ: – In my opinion, the thing to take care of would be the technique the structure and the historical memory of the classical tradition. This could become a reality if musicians had as much classical education as they have in their field.

JBN: – Whom do you find yourself listening to these days?

RZ: – Being in contact with young students I like to learn about new musical trends so I can broaden my musical knowledge.

JBN: – Let’s take a trip with a time machine: where and why would you really want to go?

RZ: – I would have liked to have lived in the bebop era, when it was a new and innovative music. I would have liked to have been part of those who created this movement.

JBN: – **What is the message you choose to bring through your music?**

RZ: – I would like to bring the message that African American music is for everyone without any distinction.



JBN: – **Do you like our questions? So far, it's been me asking you questions, now may I have a question from yourself...**

RZ: – I enjoyed answering your questions.

JBN: – **Thank you for your answers!**

JBN: – **Have you ever given a free concert during your entire concert career? At the bottom line, what are your expectations from our interview?**

RZ: – I have done so many concerts without compensation and many more for charity. I have always done free service in my parish as organist and choir director. From your interview, I expect more people to know my music and follow my artistic path. Thank you!

Interview by Simon Sargsyan