

For Immediate Release

Alexis Cuadrado: Puzzles Press Release

For full length bios, additional information and to schedule interviews with Brooklyn Jazz Underground Records Artists, please contact Jason Paul Harman Byrne at Red Cat Publicity, Email Redcatjazz@mac.com, Tel 347 578 7601

Alexis Cuadrado's 3rd CD, *Puzzles*, is an important step forward in the Barcelona-born bassist and composer's career. Not only did he write and arrange the album's music, but the project is wholly self-produced. The making of *Puzzles* also helped inspire him to co-found a new label: Brooklyn Jazz Underground Records.

The *Puzzles* band features some of the most innovative musicians in New York's jazz scene: Loren Stillman on sax, Brad Shepik on guitar and Mark Ferber on drums. Trombonist Alan Ferber is as a guest on three songs and Pete Rende adds a special touch playing organ on one track. After a year of intense playing, the group recorded the album in Alexis' Brooklyn living room in order to capture the raw sound of the band. It was a return to the classic way jazz records used to be made, but forward thinking in musical content.

"I feel it is my most private record," Alexis stated in a recent interview, "It tells my personal story of the last 3 years... it was initially conceived in the home where I moved in 2004. My wife Ave and I bought a fixer-upper house in Brooklyn and I wrote all the songs as we were renovating the space. So both projects grew together. Then I decided that I actually wanted to record it here in my living room with the band playing together without separation... so that gives it a real jazz feel. The sound we got reminds me a bit of the old Blue Note records..."

The actual music has a very 'jazz' concept to me... The songs might seem intricate or abstract, but they all have a strong jazz essence to them. I feel the pieces allowed the band to develop its own sound and vibe, and every time we perform, we find new ways of playing them that take us to unknown places.

The CD cover art is from a photo of a 1970's work of art my father-in-law painted, which is composed with thousands of puzzle pieces. It's a crazy art piece... He died in 2005, when we were in the middle of a construction zone in the house... It was very emotional for me. My wife and her mother, who's a professional photographer, took all the pictures for the album, so the record has a really strong connection to friends, home, family, life..."

Puzzles opens with the vibrant "Bright Light", a sharp and upbeat song with a bit of a pop twinge where all the band members solo with strength and eloquence.

"Levitation" is a lyrical waltz written for Sean Levitt, a jazz legend that Alexis worked with in the 1990's.

The 3rd cut, "Quintessential" is the longest and most elaborate composition of the album, with a mini-suite format that showcases Shepik in a blazing guitar solo and Loren Stillman in the closing segment. Alan Ferber joins the band on trombone here as a special guest.

"Abstract Rhythm" is a very personal take on the classic "Rhythm Changes". It features the joint soloing of Shepik and Stillman, and some trading between Alexis and Mark Ferber, where they demonstrate their quasi-ESP connection.

"B&W Pop" is a mid-tempo back-beat song, and includes the beautiful organ playing of Pete Rende. This piece was inspired by Bill Whithers and The Police.

"Canon", a layered 3-piece melody, welcomes Alan Ferber again and exposes some intense collective improvisation that explores the balance between freedom and structure.

"8&1/2" is a Fellini tribute song. With fascinating processed guitar sounds by Brad Shepik, this composition channels the surrealism of the late Italian filmmaker while the band blows freely.

"Tango" starts with a beautiful solo introduction by Alexis and develops into a Spanish influenced melody that displays the lyricism of Loren Stillman

The closer track of *Puzzles*, "East 10th Shuffle", features the fire of Alan Ferber's trombone soloing as well as great interventions by Shepik and Mark Ferber. With a feel that borrows a bit from Miles Davis' "Jack Johnson's" album, it feels like the right desert to a great meal.

Puzzles closes a kind of trilogy, together with Alexis' previous CDs *Metro* (2001) and *Visual* (2004). Without any of the trappings of a studio recording, it plainly displays exactly what it is: an honest recording of a great band.