

Biography

Critically acclaimed pianist Bob Rodriguez is one of the most distinctively imaginative musicians in contemporary jazz today. Possessing a refined virtuoso technique, extraordinary harmonic sensibility and an incomparable approach to his instrument that melds aspects of European classical and Latin music with modern jazz, Rodriguez's performances and recordings of his own compositions and interpretations of standard material have distinguished him as a truly original pianist with his own tale to tell.

Born in Cleveland, Ohio, Rodriguez began studying classical piano as a child. At 15, after hearing Teddy Wilson on the radio, he was inspired to write an original blues, revealing a nascent aptitude for composition and prompting his teacher to send him to his first jazz instructor, Hank Kahout, an expert on Wilson and Art Tatum, who was a stride piano specialist. Next, he studied privately with Bill Gidney, a bebop pianist who had accompanied Charlie Parker. Rodriguez studied harmony formally at the Modern Music School of Cleveland with Phil Rizzo (a former Stan Kenton arranger) and twelve-tone composition at Baldwin Wallace University. Later, he spent time analyzing modern classical techniques under the tutelage of classical/jazz pianist Pat Pace.

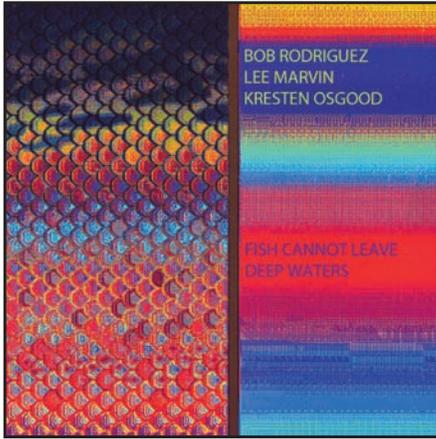
Rodriguez was an active player on the Cleveland jazz circuit throughout most of his twenties, but by the mid eighties he had an opportunity to move to Houston and took it. He was invited to teach jazz piano at the Houston High School for the Performing and Visual Arts and in 1988 he met modern jazz vocalist Tina Marsh, who asked him to be the pianist and composer-in-residence for her fourteen piece big band, the Creative Opportunity Orchestra, occasionally working with visiting luminaries such as Kenny Wheeler, Carla Bley, Steve Swallow, Billy Hart and others. Rodriguez has been recording with Tina and her ensemble since the late 80's. He's also recorded with Tina and his trio in 1997 on their co-led disc 'Out Of Time'.

In 1989 Rodriguez moved to the New York area to study with pianist Richie Beirach, the final step on his road to developing a personal style built on very modern harmony with an exceptionally melodic approach. He performed his music with the BMI advanced composers workshop and in 1994 recorded his first date as leader, "Mist", for the Nine Winds label. An album of rare beauty, it featured Rodriguez's own compositions as well as pieces by Bill Evans and Herbie Hancock, two of his primary influences. In 1998 he recorded a solo CD, "Reinventions", on the CreOp Muse label that includes two Chopin Preludes that he had arranged for 4 hands with classical pianist Cathy Campbell. Since his arrival in the jazz capitol of the world Rodriguez has performed at the Blue Note, Birdland, Iridium, Sweet Rhythm, The Kitano, Cornelia Street Cafe, Trumpets, Cecil's and many others in the city. He played solo concerts at Gracie Mansion and various venues in the tri-state area and broadcast performances on NPR in Texas, Maine, and New York.

In 2005, Rodriguez released a trio CD entitled "Corridor" a featuring bassist Mike Richmond and drummer Eliot Zigmund. In 2007 Bob was the recipient of a 2007 commission by Chamber Music America to write a piece for Tina Marsh and the Creative Opportunity Orchestra. His new piece "Shrouded Heart" was created with support from Chamber Music America's New Work: Creation and Presentation Program, funded through the generosity of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. "Shrouded Heart" premiered in Austin Texas June 13, 2008, and at Roulette in NYC October 4th, 2008.

In November 2008 Bob released a duo recording entitled "Ripples" with the jazz guitarist Scott Sherwood on the Art of Life Records label in November 2008. "Portraits", released in the spring of 2009, is Bob Rodriguez's fourth release as a leader and finds him in a solo piano setting. "Fish Cannot Leave Deep Waters" was released in the spring of 2012 featuring bassist Lee Marvin and Drummer Kresten Osgood. "Things I Meant To Say" released during the fall of 2012 featuring bassist Lee Marvin and drummer Bruce Ditmas and "So In Love" is being released sometime in 2013 featuring bassist Dominic Duval and drummer Jay Rosen.

In addition to his highly respected work as a performer, Rodriguez is a very much in demand clinician/instructor in the world of jazz and classical music education.



Fish Cannot Leave Deep Waters

Unseen Rain Records 2012

Songs

1. Wonjo
2. Remembering
3. Ennovy's Blessing
4. The Two Step
5. Cross Currents
6. Drum and Water
7. Window Traffic
8. Intro Waltz
9. Fish Cannot Leave Deep Waters

Musicians

Bob Rodriguez piano
Lee Marvin double bass
Kersten Osgood drums
Produced by Bruce Ditmas and Jack DeSalvo

Recorded November 23, 2011 at Tedesco Studio, Paramus, NJ. Mixed by Code B at Alphaville Studio, Schooleys Mountain, NJ.

Mastered by Jim DeSalvo at Beanstudio, Wayne, NJ.

Quotes

... "a combination of harmonics and delicate melodies both strikingly beautiful and hauntingly ethereal."

Elliot Simon
AllAboutJazz, April 2009

Recommended New Release "Portraits"

Andrey Henkin, Editorial Director
AllAboutJazz-New York April 2009

******The label "Art Of Life Records" just released Rodriguez' solo recording "Portraits" as well as the Duo-CD "Ripples"... "Portraits" is a lovesome tribute... to Rodriguez' art such as Bill Evans, Federico Mompou, Beirach and Monk... and "Ripples" (with Scott Sherwood) is nothing less than the absolute peak recording of all existing guitar-piano-duos in jazz history...*

Juerg Sommer
representing the cultural radio station DRS2 in Switzerland December 2008

"Rodriguez' versatility spans the languid and the stormy; the trio evokes the Bill Evans-Scott LaFaro-Paul Motion group... impressionistic bop to romping post bop..."

Midwest Jazz Magazine

****(*) Mist, "A rewarding and idiosyncratic addition to the piano-trio literature... Rodriguez has a lovely touch ..."*
The Penguin Guide to Jazz on CD

***** "...the end product is an intriguing trio sound that is, largely, unlike anything on the scene."*

Will Smith
Downbeat Magazine, September 2005

...Corridor, "this is enjoyable music with performances that reveal themselves to be much deeper than at first blush."

John Frederick Moore
Jazziz

"With "Corridor" Bob Rodriguez takes his place among such lyrical keyboard artists as Keith Jarrett, Richie Beirach, Fred Hersch and Brad Mehldau"

Tom Ineck
Berman Jazz Music Foundation

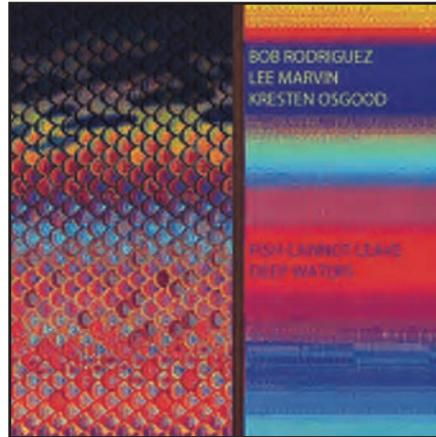
Bob Rodriguez

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Discography



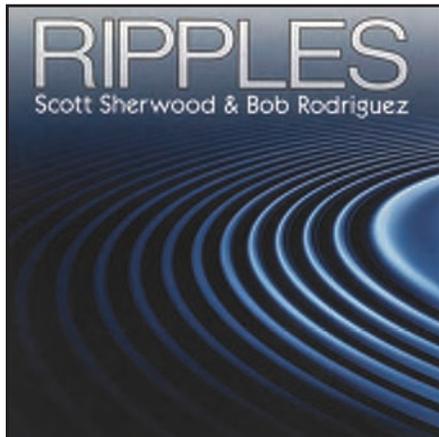
Things I Meant To Say
Unseen Rain Records 2012



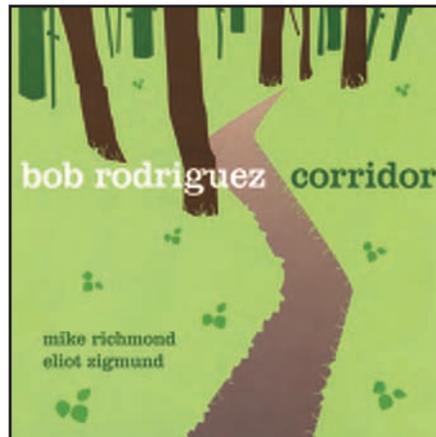
Fish Cannot Leave Deep Waters
Unseen Rain Records 2012



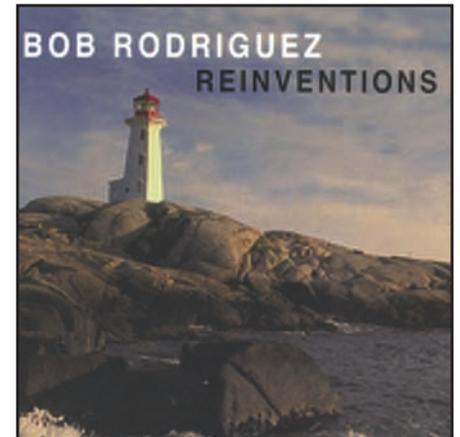
Portraits
Art Of Life Records 2009



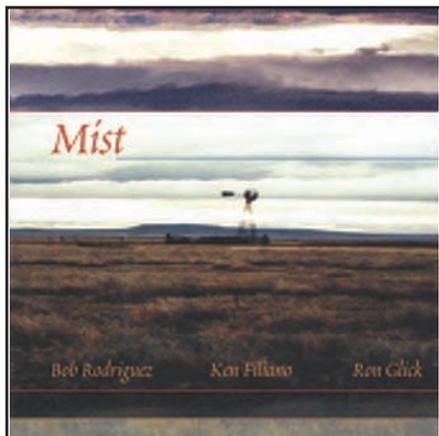
Ripples
Art Of Life Records 2008



Corridor
Art Of Life Records 2005



Reinventions
CreOp Muse 1999



Mist
9Winds 1995



Things I Meant To Say

Unseen Rain Records 2012

Songs

1. Back
2. Sundance
3. Things I Meant to Say
4. Cuarto Cosas
5. The Child
6. For Tina
7. Owner's Own

All Music by Bob Rodriguez (1-3, 6-7), Lee Marvin (1, 4, 7), and Bruce Ditmas (1)

Musicians

Bob Rodriguez piano

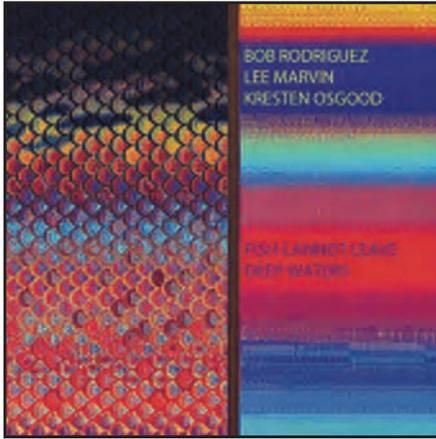
Lee Marvin bass

Bruce Ditmas drums

Produced by Bruce Ditmas and Jack DeSalvo

Recorded July 12, 2012 by Tom Tedesco at Tedesco Studio, Paramus, NJ. Mixed by Bruce Ditmas at Al-phaville, Schooley's Mountain, NJ,.

Mastered by Jim DeSalvo at Beanstudio, Wayne, NJ.



Fish Cannot Leave Deep Waters

Unseen Rain Records 2012

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Review for "Portraits"

All About Jazz April 2009

By Elliott Simon

There are times when there's the urge to put on some solo piano music, turn down the lights and experience the intimacy that no other instrument can so perfectly create. And while the pensive "Portraits" that Bob Rodriguez paints on this solo effort are done up in somber tones there is an immeasurable beauty to these dusky renderings. Recorded almost 15 years ago, Rodriguez impresses with both harmonic and melodic mastery. But it is the ways in which these two elements are blended and contrasted on these originals and standards that are most memorable.

Rodriguez draws his power, not from rhythmical fireworks or dynamic extremes, but from a refined and unhurried use of touch, tension, phrasing and line, as heard on his rendition of Bill Evans' "Waltz for Debby," wherein the melody is immediately recognizable but the setting is changed—not dramatically, but with a subtlety that allows for the dance to be more thoughtfully experienced. Likewise, Kern/Hammerstein's "All the Things You Are" is gracefully reconstructed, albeit rather dolefully, in a way that broadens the scope of the original while Monk's "Round Midnight" is darkly dressed in flowing classical lines. Rodriguez works in a fairly narrow range within which he can create a good deal of tension and release that provides continuity.

The originals are thought-provoking in a similar vein with a combination of harmonics and delicate melodies both strikingly beautiful and hauntingly ethereal. Such is the case on the appropriately hypnotic "Ostinato On A" and gracefully put-together "Trials." The closer, "No Return," is a notable exception and its herky-jerky rhythms make it the odd tune out. Rodriguez constructs these pieces from the vantage point of a consummate classicist and, to use a baseball analogy, throws a very heavy ball.

Review of "Portraits"

All About Jazz March 2009

By Glenn Astarita

Recorded in 1994 and released in 2009, New York area pianist Bob Rodriguez doesn't delve into an existential framework splattered with hidden meanings. Simply stated, the album title intimates the artist's personalized musical portraiture equally divided between standards and originals.

The pianist communicates great depth amid soul-stirring choruses and animated right hand leads. Rodriguez is a poet via his fusion of lush themes with probing storylines, all enamored by his gentle touch and acute penchant for modulating numerous undercurrents. They're highly-emotive pieces as he wraps each motif into a distinct muse or string of expressive statements that intersect and coalesce.

Rodriguez aligns grace, subtlety and warmth on the classic "Spring Is Here," where circular lower register chord voicings offer a glowing contrast to his upper register re-phrasings of the main melody. His improvisational panache is a study in alternating dynamics, often accentuated by his gentle touch and shifting pulses. And Rodriguez's "Ostinato On 'A'" is an entrancing and meticulously designed piece featuring a radiant chord-based ostinato and a memorable primary theme.

He ups the tempo while throttling from highs and lows with his ascending chord clusters on "August 1st." Here, the artist conveys a multicolored panorama, which pronounces a mindset that every note is critical to the song's success. Not that Rodriguez aims his sights from a purely technical level. On the contrary, he possesses the desire and insight to mold his craft from numerous trajectories and thought-processes to complement his enviable chops. A beguiling endeavor it is.

Review of "Portraits"

JazzWeekly.com July 2009

By George W. Harris

Pianist Bob Rodriguez has put out a few releases before, and he is usually pigeonholed as a Bill Evans-influenced player. Sheesh, who isn't, these days?

Anyway, yes, he has a touch of Evans, as well as early Hancock and Jarrett. But, what really comes across this richly rewarding solo work is Artur Rubenstein; this collection of originals and standards has that in-control, sonata-like touch that is arresting and attractive. The songs seem to segue into the next, even though they actually don't.

There is just a continual flow to these songs. Even if you've heard "Waltz for Debbie" and "Round Midnight" a million times, these versions, interspersed with originals like "To Frederico" and "Ostinato On 'A'" have a mystery about them that hasn't been explored before. It's almost like a 50 minute suite. Thoughtful and thought provoking.

Review of "Ripples" and "Portraits"

Juerg Sommer

I got the insider-recommendation concerning the exquisite Duo of guitarist Scott Sherwood and pianist Bob Rodriguez from a saxophone player known as one of the most knowledgeable connoisseurs of the New York scene.

And my interest grew when pianist Richie Beirach said that Rodriguez has definitely been his most talented student ever. The label "Art Of Life Records" now just released Rodriguez' solorecording "Portraits" as well as the Duo-CD "Ripples".

"Portraits" is a lovesome tribute to a few inspirational musicians of importance to Rodriguez' art such as Bill Evans, Federico Mompou, Beirach and Monk. And "Ripples" is nothing less than the absolute peak recording of all existing guitar-piano-duos in jazz history, including the legendary recordings of Jim Hall with John Lewis resp. Bill Evans up to the contemporary John Abercrombie-Duos with Beirach, Andy LaVerne and Marc Copland.

Scott Sherwood is a true master of melodic imagination. No wonder if one knows that he has learned his distinctive art with masters such as John Abercrombie.

Review of "Portraits"

Jazz Improv NY May 2009

By Dan Bilawsky

The solo piano music of Bob Rodriguez takes place at the crossroads between Impressionism, Romanticism and Jazz Improvisation.

"To Frederico," the brief opening track, shows Rodriguez to be a thoughtful musical sculptor. While this track comes and goes fairly quickly, the other material shows that he isn't afraid to take his time fleshing out an idea.

Rodriguez throws a dab of New Age music (in a good way) into the nine performances on this album. "Trials," with its occasional Mediterranean influenced moodiness and surprise turns, is a stand out original and Rodriguez turns "All The Things You Are" into a sad meditation. Peace and solitude come through on all of these pieces, with "August 1st" exemplifying these traits best. "No Return" closes the album with some menacing moments thrown into the mix that show off a slightly darker side of this inviting music.

Review of "Portraits"

Linda Dahl

Linda Dahl is the author of a number of acclaimed books about jazz, including *Haunted Heart* and *Morning Glory*.

Pianist Bob Rodriguez is that *rara avis*, even in jazz, a constantly interesting improviser. "When playing in a solo situation," he says, "you are committed after the first note. You are 'in the music and you just go with it.'" Rodriguez has a kind of inner GPS that plots his musical ventures unerringly.

His new release, the solo album *Portraits*, beautifully refashions the harmonics of well-known ballads and originals, including a nod to one of his favorite 19th composer-improvisers, Frederic Chopin ('Frederico').

No mere technocrat of the music, Rodriguez, balances a delicacy of touch with a passionate sense of discovery. Bob Rodriguez is a musician's musician, and a listener's delight'.

Review of "Corridor"

Independent Exposure

By E.J. Iannelli

Coltrane pops up again with "Naima" on pianist Bob Rodriguez's *Corridor*, his first trio recording as leader in eleven years, and a very different disc to the above. Certain qualities – its intimacy, its soberness, its intensity – call to mind Tord Gustavsen's *The Ground*, and both pianists, I believe, openly share an affinity for Bill Evans; but Rodriguez's playing has a harmonic and melodic sophistication, not to mention a deeply nuanced poetic sensibility, that Gustavsen hasn't yet wholly attained, and which Evans only reached during the boldest and most introspective periods in his life. In bassist Mike Richmond and drummer Eliot Zigmund he has found an enviable pair of musicians who are able to match and balance him so intuitively.

As its title suggests, the opener "Corridor" begins at a walking pace and moves ahead within certain confines; then it really opens up and breathes. Rodriguez's style is such that it's impossible to know what's coming next (one wonders if he does, either, or if he merely sounds so assured while improvising by the seat of his pants). Each fresh passage leads to a discovery. There are moments on the title track – and throughout the disc, in fact – that positively sparkle with wonder and revelation, and Rodriguez's ability to express that state so fully is what makes one think he must actually be experiencing it for himself at that very moment. The original "It's Not That Dark" is stunningly beautiful, a virtuoso display of Rodriguez's unique stylistic approach and ability. He wears both his classical training and romanticism on his sleeve for his interpretation of the violinist Fritz Kreisler's "Liebeslied" as well as the original that follows, "Within the Line."

This will definitely find favor with devotees of ECM, though as 2005 winds to a close, it's more than likely that *Corridor* will begin appearing on "best of" lists across the board. The added bonus is that this is a Super Audio CD, to be had at the same price as a regular CD. Unequivocally recommended.

Review of "Corridor"

JAZZIZ Magazine October 2005

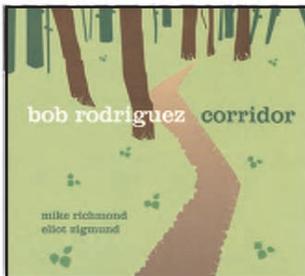
By John Frederick Moore

Bob Rodriguez

Corridor

(CreOp Muse)

It's easy to forget that innovation isn't always about creating new forms. Often it's simply a musician applying his own sense of style to bring a fresh approach to a familiar form. That's exactly what you'll find in



this recording from pianist Bob Rodriguez.

Rodriguez's classical influences are obvious in his crystalline, well-articulated phrases, as well as in his choice to interpret Fritz Kreisler's "Liebesleid." But it doesn't take long to realize that's Rodriguez's style is quietly disarming. His version of John Coltrane's "Naima" moves along fairly straightforwardly until he begins subtly altering the harmonies. Duke Ellington's "Prelude to a Kiss" is so ethereally pleasant that at first you don't realize how much Rodriguez has deconstructed the melody to suit his impressionistic style. Rodriguez's original compositions are equally effective, particularly the title track, with its shifting harmonies, and the haunting "It's Not That Dark."

The rest of the trio is in perfect sympathy

with their leader. Bassist Mike Richmond deftly weaves around Rodriguez's melodic lines, while drummer Elliot Sigmund's cymbal work heightens the atmospheric quality of these pieces.

The only complaint is that there's little variation in terms of pacing and tone. A couple of uptempo or lighthearted pieces wouldn't have hurt. But that doesn't take away from the fact that this is enjoyable music with performances that reveal themselves to be much deeper than at first blush.

— John Frederick Moore

Review of "Corridor"

Downbeat Magazine September 2005

By Will Smith

The eight musical doorways leading off pianist Bob Rodriguez's *Corridor* offer an alternating program of his original works and reharmonized standards or jazz classics. A beautiful yet unsentimental lyricism pervades his approach. In addition to a clear classical delicacy in Rodriguez's stylistic touch, there's an underlying strength within the twists and turns of his voicings and the textures he develops up with bassist Mike Richmond and drummer Eliot Zigmund.

The pianist shows he has heard Bill Evans and Keith Jarrett, as well as adding more than a bit of the angularity of Herbie Hancock and Richie Beirach. However, the end product is an intriguing trio sound that is, largely, unlike anything on the scene. Notes and phrases are allowed room to breathe and hang in the air. Duke Ellington's "Prelude To A Kiss," John Coltrane's "Naima," Fritz Kreisler's "Liebesleid" and Rodgers & Hart's "Spring Is Here" are treated to reworkings that indicate new pathways. Rodriguez's own compositions mix the stateliness of chamber music with jazz's openness and loosely swinging thrust.

Review of "Corridor"

CADENCE Magazine March 2006 Vol. 32, No. 3

New York-based pianist Bob Rodriguez was classically trained in his boyhood home of Cleveland until he heard Teddy Wilson. Then his studies turned to Jazz as he worked with Richie Beirach and others. However, Rodriguez never abandoned his interests in classical music. In fact, now Rodriguez intentionally combines the harmonies of some twentieth-century classical composers with those of Jazz standards, or incorporates them into his own compositions. On (6), Rodriguez presents his style as one that involves extended lines of undulating improvisation. The complexities of the music are apparent for close listeners even though they aren't demonstrated through over-the-top improvisation that calls more attention to the performance than the music. Rather, Rodriguez's trio explores music of inherent beauty that receives respective treatment in an understated style that values the contribution of each note, allowing not only its strike, but also its fade, to add to the overall effect of a phrase and then a line and then a melody and then a modulation. Even though Rodriguez includes some standards on *Corridor*, as well as one classical piece, the overall effect from those, as well as from his own compositions, is of a single concept, as Rodriguez's harmonization appears to derive from a consistently explorative source. At times, his composition "Within the Line" includes the same changes as those he applies to "Prelude to a Kiss," though the moods of the songs are entirely different, so transformed does "Prelude to a Kiss" become. "Spring Is Here" comes across not so much as a ballad as an etude, rubato during its initial motivic development and then quietly sparkling with upper-keyboard ornamentation. With a matured style of minimalism and warm glowing appeal, Rodriguez disarms even as his musical implication and unconventional changes attain a level of sophistication not readily apparent to the casual listener.

Review of "Corridor"

BermanMusicFoundation.org

By Tom Ineck

Add another name to those distinguished jazz pianists who follow—with respect and admiration—in the stylistic footsteps of Bill Evans. With "Corridor," Bob Rodriguez takes his place among such great lyrical keyboard artists as Keith Jarrett, Richie Beirach, Fred Hersch and Brad Mehldau. Like those who came before, Rodriguez seems most comfortable in the trio setting, here receiving outstanding support and collaboration from the duo of bassist Mike Richmond and drummer Eliot Zigmund. The pianist's prodigious interpretative powers are most evident on the trio's covers—including Ellington's "Prelude to a Kiss," Coltrane's "Naima" and Rodgers and Hart's "Spring Is Here." He artfully re-imagines "Prelude," melodically, harmonically and rhythmically. The listener recognizes the departure from convention, but is drawn irresistibly along by the pianist's sense of adventure. In its elegiac introspection, Fritz Kreisler's "Liebesleid (Love's Sorrow)" is a perfect fit with the others.

Rodriguez also proves himself an accomplished composer. The luxurious title track evolves for more than nine minutes. After threatening to deconstruct early on, it eventually arises like a triumphant Phoenix from the ashes. Like the creative process that it describes, "Inside" provides a vehicle for trio members to dig deep "inside" the lovely chord changes for all the harmonic and melodic potential. "It's Not That Dark" begins with a classical interlude that—indeed—seems dark and foreboding, but the mood brightens somewhat as the tension is resolved. "Within the Line" comes as close to going uptempo as anything here.

Richmond employs a resonant, singing tone much like Jarrett's longtime bassist, Gary Peacock, and harking back to Evans sidemen Eddie Gomez and Scott LaFaro. Zigmund is the epitome of taste, with skillful brushwork, a measured gait, and only occasional, well-placed flourishes on cymbals. The entire disc is subdued, as though by thematic design. Some may object to its total absence of straight-ahead, up-tempo swingers, but given a chance, this late-night listening experience is extremely rewarding.
