



Al Maniscalco Quartet

Baltimore City Paper / August 20, 2003

CD Title: More In My Heart

Year: 2003

Record Label: Jalkoda Records

Tenor saxophonist Al Maniscalco isn't a showboat who's going to drown you under cascading runs of acrobatic fingering or wave after endless wave of chops. Preferring to let his polished bop phrasings sit in a groove's warm pockets, Maniscalco is at his best at a midtempo swing or a dreamy ballad, and he sticks to those easy-going gaits on his third album, *More in My Heart*. Only don't think the slower tempos translate to lackluster playing. Maniscalco is one player and composer who just loves the subtlety of the slower cadences, where a carefully considered solo makes more out of less, and his own compositions and arrangements nicely open up space for his able sidemen--George Colligan (piano, Fender Rhodes), Eric Kennedy (drums), and Jeff Reed (bass). And the heart of this disc is Reed and Kennedy, who inject a lively pizzazz into the affair. Their snappy backbeat in "12/10" sets up an elegantly understated solo from Colligan, after which they slowly pick up the pace for Maniscalco's own swinging centerpiece. Kennedy's own "A Nice Walk in the Park" starts out at a stroll, with Maniscalco laying airy, jaunty lines on top. And Kennedy and Reed hold the staccato starts, stops, and leapfrogging times of Maniscalco's limber "Al's the Things You Are" together without breaking a sweat, heating up during the soaring saxophone solo and cooling down for another impeccably tasteful display from Colligan.

Reviewed by: Bret McCabe / Baltimore City Paper

WWW.ALMANISCALCO.COM