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CHE TRIO - TRES AL TOQUE

THE FIRST TIME I LISTENED TO THE ALL-INSTRUMENTAL *TRES AL TOQUE*, I WAS ENTRANCED BY THE URBANITY AND PROFESSIONALISM OF THE DISC. THE SECOND TIME I BEGAN TO WONDER IF IT WAS A LITTLE TOO SLICK.



Buenos Aires guitarists Daniel Homer, Ricardo Lew and Lucas Homer are expert performers, and Daniel Homer is clearly a very experienced arranger and composer. José Luis “Colo” Belmonte also deserves a huge shout as a highly assured drummer and percussionist, equally capable of casually but deftly sketching highlights in the background of tracks as of sustaining two-minute solos (as he does for example in Daniel Homer’s “Oriente”).

The instrumental technique is so secure and well-oiled as to feel no need for excessively showy displays. The harmonic language is post-Weather Report laid-back jazz funk, the production is lush and resonant but the arrangements are clear — the three guitarists supplement their texture sparingly with guest appearances from electric guitar, keyboards, piano, percussion and Spanish guitar (often from fellow members of the Homer family), as well as a standard rhythm section of drums and (apparently anonymous) bass guitar.

The sound is one of musicians enjoying themselves to the full, untroubled alike by any emotional baggage or by any generic preconceptions. So much so that it seems churlish to respond with anything other than the same open-hearted geniality that suffuses this production and clearly characterises the trio’s approach to their

craft.

The trouble with untroubled, though, is that complex or dark emotion is what drives so much of the musical spirit, and a world without shadow can look somewhat flat. The complete lack of aggression can begin to be a little insipid, never less so than in the final track, a hugely misguided, drippy medley of Ennio Morricone's music for *Cinema Paradiso* and Lennon and McCartney's "For No One".

This aberration aside, the musicality is consistent and the album would grace any dinner party with a pleasant and intelligent background. There are even a couple of stand-outs – Homer's thickly harmonised "Vals para Warren" and César Camargo Mariano's athletic "Curumin" are both worthy of better albums. But, although the group's artistic approach is clearly sincere, don't expect repeated listening to yield profound insights.

Byte and Music 72025

—Matthew Shorter
Friday 28 January 2005

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