

Created by: Edward F. Nesta

Tommaso Starace - Plays the Photos of Elliott Erwitt



An artistic fusion of image and sound set to a jazz beat.



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Tommaso Starace - Plays the Photos of Elliott Erwitt: *Keep Moving Please; Set Me Free [Lament of a Mannequin]; Goodbyes; Tickets...Please!; Spinning Out of Control; Felix, Gladys, and Rover; Loving Gloves; Tongue in Cheek*

Personnel: Tommaso Starace: saxophone; Roger Beaujolais: vibraphone; Liam Noble: piano; Julian Bury: bass; Jim Hart: drums

Tommaso Starace - Plays the Photos of Elliott Erwitt is an artistic fusion of image and sound with Tommaso Starace interpreting with his brand of jazz, the photos of world-renowned photographer and past president of Magnum Photos, Elliott Erwitt (www.elliott Erwitt.com). As we all do from time-to-time, we see an image and let our mind wander creating a short story from the image; this release has Tommaso Starace lending his creative talents to write a musical short story for each photo.

Born in Milan, Tommaso started playing the alto saxophone at 18. Though he started a bit later in life, he took to the saxophone and to the components of music in an extremely expeditious fashion attending jazz seminars at Berklee College of Music, attending school at the Birmingham Conservatoire, studying with saxophonist Don Braden in Louisville, Kentucky, and finally ended up in London to attend the Guildhall School of Music and Drama where he completed the Jazz postgraduate course. Within nine years of picking up the alto saxophone, he produced his first CD of standards and original compositions to rave reviews. He followed up his first release with **Tommaso Starace - Plays the Photos of Elliott Erwitt**, which is a compilation of eight original works.

In many of my reviews, I pay particular attention to the lyrics especially when they play a vital role in interpreting the music; in the case of **Tommaso Starace - Plays the Photos of Elliott Erwitt**, I feel it is musically rewarding if you view each black and white photo of Elliott Erwitt while listening to the arrangement for that photo. Though I implore you to view the photos while listening to each track, I must confess that like a child, when I got the CD I opened it and tossed it on the player before properly introducing myself to the musician, the photos, and the concept. I found the music exciting and very interpretive, and to my surprise, after reading the concept behind the release, I realized the true interpretation, and found the release even more distinctive.

Providing a review of **Tommaso Starace - Plays the Photos of Elliott Erwitt** without you, the reader, having the ability to view the incredible images captured by the eye of Elliott Erwitt at the same time, is like

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drinking a 1961 Château Pétrus when you have a bad cold, or driving a Ferrari with an automatic transmission, all of the elements are there, but the sensation is truncated. Now that I have whet your musical and artistic appetite, I will try to capture some of the excitement, until you have the opportunity to procure your own copy, by saying that the music is an exciting interpretive brand of jazz, which on its own [no photos] is superb. When you layer in the photos, you have a release that entertains all of your senses and more; you can feel how Tommaso took each photo and interpreted a musical story, and in some cases a journey.

The track "Set Me Free [Lament of a Mannequin]" is written to a photo of a bald, armless, legs crossed, bare mannequin 'looking' out a store window at a passersby who in turn is caught glancing back at the mannequin with a somewhat threatening fixed stare on her face. The track starts out with the bass, piano and drums setting a downbeat rhythm baseline which projects a feeling of lament for the mannequin, the saxophone melody comes in and you can feel the sadness and the weeping of the mannequin as she 'sees' the world revolve around her in her desperation to escape. This photo - music combination was the strongest of the tracks for me, as I created a similar story in my mind, which Tommaso conveyed through his music.

This is a unique collaboration of mind, music, sight and feeling, which is wrapped-up in a tight package - **Tommaso Starace - Plays the Photos of Elliott Erwitt.**

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