

Featured Artist: Jerry Tachoir Group

CD Title: Travels

Year: 2008

Record Label: Avita Jazz

Style: Contemporary Jazz

Musicians: Jerry Tachoir (vibes, marimba, synthesized mallets), Marlene Tachoir (piano), Roy Vogt (bass), Ralph Pace (drums), Mat Britain (steel drums), Tom Roady (percussion)



Review:

Vibraphonist, marimba and mallet synthesizer master Jerry Tachoir (pronounced Tash'-wah), who earned his Bachelor's degree from the Berklee College of Music, leads the Jerry Tachoir Group on a collection of tunes inspired by places the ensemble has traveled to in recent years. The group includes his wife, Marlene, on piano and wordless vocals, Roy Vogt on bass, Ralph Pace on drums, Tom Roady on percussion and Mat Britain on steel drums. Their recent appearances include performances at The Northsea Jazz Festival in Holland, the Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland, The International Festival of Jazz in Montreal, The Ottawa Jazz Festival and The Mellon Jazz Festival. Jerry is the author of the books *Contemporary Mallet Method*, *An Approach to the Vibraphone & Marimba* and *Solo Vibraphone Collection*, both published by Riohcat Music.

This recording features the ensemble in mostly Latin tinged original compositions by Marlene that while melodious enough to be considered in the contemporary musical genre, incorporate a number of extended solos more recognized with straight-ahead jazz. In other words, if this was released in the mid-1970s it would be considered jazz and not slapped into a further nullifying jazz subgenre as too much of today's jazz is.

All of the melodies have wonderful lilting lifts that swing easily and gently. The incorporation of Marlene's vocals give them the further dimension of light-hearted summer music perfect for traveling in the car on sunny days. With respect to the extended solos, each of the musicians brings different strengths to their work. Jerry is a gifted soloist whose use of contrary motion between his mallets finds nooks and crannies in the harmonic structures and digs them out in logical manners.

Bassist Vogt is a true heavyweight improviser. His solo on "No Sweat" is not just technically meticulous and inspirational, but also a melodic primer in how it's possible to play lines as beautiful as any horn player and make them sing out from the instrument's strings at the same time.

Jerry is an improviser and musician of the top rank. His solos are always focused on conveying listenable melodies that work within the framework of Marlene's traditional harmonic structures. In tandem with his wife's solos they each complement the other, not just in how they fit together when placed side-by-side, as on "Safuenay," but also in how each will take improvisation ideas from the other and play them out in a different ways.

If there is a weakness it's that the melodies on this particular release are not memorable enough, especially when one considers how lightly spritful and playful Ralph Pace's drumset work makes them. The pieces are all performed expertly and with a well polished sheen, just note how clearly all the musicians fit their work together on "Market Place" - nobody ever steps on the other's toes with each bringing their own piece of the puzzle to a wonderfully built crescendo - but when the disc is over no memory of the individual tracks

stays in one's mind. Not that this is necessarily bad, it's just that after so excellent a recording of light and breezy melodies listeners should leave with a bopping hook in their head making them want to pull the disc out for repeated listening over and over again.

Tracks: Hip Joint, No Sweat, Caribbean Express, Elect

Record Label Website: <http://www.avitajazz.com/>

Artist's Website: <http://www.tachoir.com/>

Reviewed by: [Thomas R. Erdmann](#)

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