

Ionata | Dado Moroni

2 FOR DUKE

Dado Moroni | piano

Max Ionata | saxophone

The artistic paths of Dado Moroni and Max Ionata intersect in honour of Duke Ellington, giving life and sound to "2 for Duke." A one-way trip to Ellingtonia, a land created by two of the greatest musicians of the 20th century, Duke Ellington and his alter ego Billy Strayhorn - a man who avoided the limelight yet many believe to be the true inspiring source of Ellingtonian aesthetic. Regardless of who did what, these two contemporary geniuses left an indelible mark on music in general, not only on jazz. Ellington and Strayhorn invented something new, laying the harmonic and melodic foundations of a musical language that was several decades ahead of their time. Produced by Jando Music, in collaboration with Via Veneto Jazz, this album reflects the passion which Dado and Max always shared for Duke's music, heavily influencing them through time.

The refined dialogue between sax and piano portrays all the passion, love and admiration for this great American jazz musician who indeleibly shaped world musical heritage. Moreover, Dado Moroni worked extensively with key sidemen from Ellington's band such as bassist Jimmy Woode and drummer Sam Woodyard, allowing him to fully immerse himself into the original sounds of the man who, according to many, is considered the greatest composer in jazz history. Thanks to prominent saxophonist Max Ionata's extraordinary interpretative skills, these sounds are unquestionably present in "2 for Duke".

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COVER LINES| TWO FOR DUKE

by FRANCO FAYENZ

This is a beautiful CD, played with intense participation by two excellent soloists who complement each other. This creative interpretation of the music of legendary duo Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn, is an excellent, original idea: on the one hand there's Dado Moroni on the piano (also on double bass in Just Squeeze Me; combining vocals and keyboard in Solitude) while on the other hand there's Max Ionata who literally makes his tenor sax sing. The first time I listened to Max Ionata was a couple of years ago and I really enjoyed his beautiful precise phrases and the corpulent sound of his tenor sax. The sound and approach are so personal – there's no possible comparison to be made with other saxophonists, not even by those experts who love to find matches. Here I found the best and most enduring example of his qualities and his ability to immerse himself in Ellington's refined and complex world. With regards to Dado Moroni, for over twenty years I've considered him the most "American" and the most complete of the Italian jazz pianists, and this statement is certainly nothing new. Dado discovered these characteristics in his inner nature, in his technique and in his sonic sensibility as music connoisseur and enhanced them by dividing his time between Italy and the US. He's a pianist and jazzman at ease in any situation, shifting from traditional stride to joyous mainstream or unexpected, eclectic twists. Of particular significance concerning "2 for Duke", is his long collaboration with Jimmy Woode and Sam Woodyard who were famous Ellington sidemen. However, it's worthwhile to point out that after careful and repeated listening of these eleven beautifully composed and executed songs, the long-standing mystery of the artistic relationship between Ellington and Strayhorn re-emerges. It's difficult to pin down where Ellington's work ends and Strayhorn's begins. Six tracks in "2 for Duke" are composed by Ellington, one is co-written by both, three are Strayhorn compositions, while Perdido, the last track, is the famous jazz standard composed by Juan Tizol, made famous by Duke Ellington.