



BY BOBBY REED

Alex Mercado Trio, *Symbiosis*

(Fonarte Latino)

Pianist Alex Mercado is one of the finest jazz musicians that Mexico has produced. On his new trio album, he teams up with simpatico collaborators who are equal to his incredible talent. Bassist Scott Colley and drummer Antonio Sanchez know each other's styles extremely well because they've recorded and toured together in the New Gary Burton Quartet, and they've

worked in the trio format with pianist Enrico Pieranunzi. Here, on Mercado's *Symbiosis*, the rapport between all three musicians is deeply impressive. Like Colley, Mercado is a highly melodic player; and like Sanchez, the pianist is masterfully adept at shifting tempos and building drama over the course of a long tune. The result of these musicians' telepathy is a richly cohesive program of 10 original Mercado compositions. The leader's playing is characterized by fierce dynamics and a command of the entire keyboard, whether he's coaxing gentle, delicate notes with his right hand or generating explosive propulsion with his left. From the shimmering pianism of the title track, to the whimsical flair of "What Lays Beyond," to the melodic motifs of "Two Doors," everything here is delivered with power and confidence. There's no hint of wandering or meandering; this trio knows exactly where it's going and precisely how to get there.

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