

AL MANISCALCO *quartet*

Featured Artist: Al Maniscalco



CD Title: *Live at Tidings Park*

Year: 2000

Record Label: Jalkoda Records

Style: Straight-Ahead / Classic

Musicians: Al Maniscalco (saxophones), Darius Scott (piano), Eric Kennedy (drums), Jeff Reed (bass)

Review: *LIVE AT TIDINGS PARK* captures saxophonist Al Maniscalco and his band on a midsummer evening's concert. It's not hard to conjure a convivial atmosphere of a lush, humid park filled with grown-ups stretching out on lawn, children laughing on swings, dogs leaping at thrown Frisbees, and the band striking out tunes as the brilliant colors of the late afternoon fade to black.

The taping of the concert was never intended to be an album. Maniscalco recorded the performance on his mini-disc recorder to be played and erased after his review of the concert. What Maniscalco caught was a performance in which the band was tight and the improvisation wicked. And reflected the setting and the mood of a carefree evening in the park.

The rough recording was re-mixed and mastered to bring out the best possible sound qualities. There are moments of electrical interference that remain. Rather than distract, these actually enhance the feeling of attending a live, outdoor concert.

"If This Isn't Love" starts the set with a blazing extended solo by Maniscalco that recalls at different times Coltrane and Rollins. Maniscalco simply takes off with band in tow and later is spelled by a very delicate piano interlude by Darius Scott. Drummer Eric Kennedy then breaks up the bucolic sensibility with a brilliant dissonant conclusion. Maniscalco recalls the glowing sexiness of Dexter Gordon in the beautiful rendition of 'What A Difference A Day Makes.' Framed by the sounds of kids playing nearby, 'Alicia' is a bittersweet ballad dripping with heartfelt pangs of departed love. While 'Alicia' is stirring up some old ghosts, 'Inspiration' may be the best of the set. It's a simple melody that lends itself to impressive improvisation and captures the sublime mood of a summer's twilight.

While this quartet is not well known outside of the Baltimore area, it is worth remembering the name should Al Maniscalco and his band come to play in your neighborhood park.

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

Reviewed by: John Doll

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