



## GLOBAL MAGIC

### THE ULTIMATE ACT WORLD JAZZ ANTHOLOGY VOL. V

50 Global Players  
18 Tracks  
71 Minutes

ACT 9290-2

LC 07644



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#### “Global Magic”: the magic of co-existence

The term “world music” has long since become a catch-word that causes mistrust, since it often stands for music that aims for the quickest exotic effect with the lowest common denominator. This sampler is the latest in a series that began in 1996 with the CD “A Little Magic in a Noisy World”. That CD has since become an ACT classic, and we feel honored to be able to apply the phrase “world-embracing” to these samplers. The 18 pieces presented here display an unbelievable variety. They travel the routes that jazz musicians and folk virtuosos from the most diverse backgrounds have taken: to Africa, Asia, Latin America, and such lands as Sardinia, Sweden, and Norway. Here there is no “common denominator” – the music’s originality is given free rein.

“Global Magic”: the magic of co-existence. Born in Paris the son of Vietnamese parents, guitarist Nguyễn Lê is the musician that appears most often on this CD. He expresses best why all of these recordings work: “...let the inter-twinning musical relationships develop in a way in which each musician can delve into his own cultural background to bring out his best.” In their collaboration with Lê, trumpeter Paulo Fresu and Vietnamese singer Huong Thanh, whose style is rooted in tradition, combine high-explosive jazz and fragile Far-Eastern music culture without diminishing their own stylistic musical worlds (track 2). Whenever and wherever Lê is involved, the other musicians are allowed to totally adhere to their musical identities. This is true whether it is with the Turkish reed-flute virtuoso Kudsi Erguner’s project “Islam Blues, which delves deeply into the Sufi tradition (take 9), or with the sensitive and steadfast master drummer Peter Erskine, and the elastic bassist Michel Benita, the other two members of the wonderfully sensitive trio E-L-B (Erskin-Lê-Benita) (track 11).

**Co-existence means: everyone remains himself**, and yet each is open to the other’s uniqueness: multi-individual instead of multi-cultural. This co-existence runs through the music on several different levels. The Algerian drummer Karim Ziad is another rising star on the international scene who has chosen Paris as his home. With his research into his North African musical roots, he, naturally, has the Bosnian pianist Bojan Zulfikarpasic with him (track 7). Jazz star Paolo Fresu pays homage to Sardinia together with some of the island’s great folk musicians (track 10).

With his artfully stylized compositions and awareness of form and structure, the American saxophonist David Binney lets soloist the likes of Chris Potter and Uri Caine strut their stuff. Here is another case in which the players don’t pull themselves down to the same level; rather, they push each other to a higher plateau (track 15).

“Global Magic” – magic that only works through individuality. With celebrated pianist Jens Thomas’ group Triocolor, the trips to West Africa didn’t result in a fake Afro-color-decorated pseudo-ethnic mix; instead, the trio works the trip’s impressions into their own idiom (track 3). Likewise, pianist Richie Beirach, violinist Gregor Huebner, and bassist George Mraz stay far-removed from all the tourist clichés when they base their improvisation on East European themes (track 6).

**Jazz (as far as that word alone suffices)** at the beginning of the 21st century can take on every conceivable form. “Global Magic” demonstrates this. It only seems that worlds lie between the compact, energetic playing of the Swedish Esbjörn-Svensson trio (track 1) and the whirling irony of the Berlin anarcho-crew Der Rote Bereich (track 13).

**Gerado Nuñez's flamenco guitar** (track 4) has its place in the spectrum of today's jazz just as much as a song from songwriter and film-music genius Randy Neuman as sung by Norwegian Sidsel Endersen. (track 16). ACT company head Siegfried Loch is convinced that nothing is out of place, nothing is foreign as long as two essential criteria are met: the one: music of the highest quality. The other: the musicians must be allowed the greatest possible freedom and at the same time be aware and supportive of each other. And this principle functions perfectly on this CD. It is also a principle that works as a model for "Global Magic" outside the world of music.

#### **Track list:**

##### **1. ESBJÖRN SVENSSON TRIO. Reminiscence Of A Soul (from ACT 9009-2)**

Still an insider's tip a few years ago, the trio has become one of the jazz critic's favorite groups in the whole of Europe. The playing of the Esbjörn Svensson Trio is compact, full of energy, and radically individualistic. The English magazine *Jazzwise* chose the Swedish formation as "trio of the year 2000" in honor of their CD "Good Morning, Susie Soho". On the original composition "Reminiscence Of A Soul", the musicians demonstrate their exceptional ability to create a state of high tension and excitement between quiet urgency and thick, pulsing intensity.

##### **2. HUONG THANH – PAOLO FRESU – NGUYỄN LÊ: Two Sisters (from ACT 9293-2 release date September 2001)**

To be able to bring together musicians from the most diverse origins and let them "...delve into their cultural backgrounds and bring out their best..." is what world-class guitarist and Parisian-born son of Vietnamese parents Nguyễn Lê had in mind as he, Vietnamese singer Huong Thanh, and the Italian virtuoso trumpeter Paolo Fresu got together for this project. Lê's composition "Two Sisters" is more than just an exotic *pièce de résistance* for the group.

##### **3. JENS THOMAS – TRICOLOR: Sakyi's Song (from ACT 9285-2)**

In 2000 he was Germany's top rising star. The Hannover-born pianist Jens Thomas was awarded a variety prizes for his interpretations of the compositions of film music composer Ennio Morricone as recorded on Thomas's CD "You Can't Keep a Good Cowboy Down". With bassist Stephan Weeke and drummer Björn Lücker, the group Tricolor is Thomas's musical home. On their CD "Colours of Ghana" the group assimilates the impressions of two West African trips while still retaining their radically individual sound. As can be heard on the breathtakingly lyrical piece "Sakyi's Song", they do this without any superficial adulation.

##### **4. GERARDO NUÑEZ – RENAUD GARCIA-FONS: (from ACT 9284-2)**

Heart and passion shine through: the similarity of two such seemingly disparate musical styles as Flamenco and jazz lies not just in these two outstanding characteristics. Improvisation plays a major role in both. In the much talked about Grammy nominated 1993 ACT album "Jazzpaña", the two styles were excitingly joined. The follow-up CD "Jazzpaña II" has been even more successful. In the piece "Un amor real" the flamenco guitarist Gerardo Nuñez and the French-Spanish bass virtuoso Renaud Garcia-Fons engage in a passionate, inspired encounter.

##### **5. GILBERTO GIL – TRILOK GURTU – BUGGE WESSELTOFT: Tatá Engenho Novo (from ACT 5019-2)**

The distance between Brazil and Norway is surprisingly short, at least in musical terms. On recording the CD "O Sol de Oslo" (Oslo Sun), Brazilian singer Gilberto Gil and Norwegian pianist Bugge Wesseltoft had no problem understanding each other. On the piece "Tatá Engenho Novo" they show, together with accordionist Toninho Farragutti and Indian star percussionist Trilok Gurtu, that the "embolada" rhythm of the street and the market place is not so distant from the fast word-cascade of hip-hop.

##### **6. BEIRACH – HUEBNER – MRAZ: Dubrawuschka (from ACT 9276-2)**

Pianist Richie Beirach, violinist Gregor Huebner, and bassist George Mraz call their group project "Round About Bartok", taking a cue from Thelonious Monk's classic ballad "Round Midnight". The American Beirach sometimes feels like "Bartok's great-nephew in New York". It's also because of the Hungarian composer's work with folk music that Bartok stands in as the group's musical "Godfather". The group delves into past melodies from Russia and Romania and mixes them with gripping elements from jazz and classical music, as is demonstrated by the piece on this CD, the traditional composition "Dubrawuschka"

### **7. KARIM ZIAD: Alouhid (from ACT 9282-2)**

Just as the golden-shod feet of the immigrant's son Zinedine Zidane put their stamp on the French National Soccer Team's style, so too do North African sounds influence the French capital's contemporary music scene. The Algerian-born singer, composer, and percussionist won his spurs working with Joe Zawinul and Rai-Star Cheb Mami. He calls his debut album "Ifrikya". It pays homage to Africa and at the same time to his current home, Paris. The piece "Alouhid" is "melting pot" music in the best sense, combining the singing of Karim Ziad with the playing of Bosnian pianist Bojan Z. and Vietnamese-French guitarist Nguyễn Lê.

### **8. SORIBA KOUYATÉ: Diya (from ACT 9288-2)**

He wants to demonstrate that "...you can play everything on this instrument..." "This instrument" is the kora, the 21-string African harp with its gourd body. Soriba Kouyaté plays classic, funk, and jazz, as well as the traditional music of his country. The piece "Diya" comes from Guinea, and with an organic matter-of-factness it combines Kouyaté's kora sound with Didier Malherbe's flute improvisations, Linley Marthe's bass playing, and Joel Allouche's percussion. The results: a West African melody that is a potential jazz standard.

### **9. KUDSI ERGUNER. Twins (from ACT 9287-2)**

The press praised Kudsi Erguner, the Turkish reed-flute virtuoso who now calls Paris home, for his ACT CD "Ottomania", "World-music of a very special sort" was how one critic put it. "Islam Blues" is the richer, more complex sequel to the first project, which combines the music of the Ottoman Empire with jazz. It is a profound and yet altogether comprehensible homage to Sufism, Islam's teachings of wisdom. Top-class guests, such as guitarist Nguyễn Lê, drummer Karim Ziad, and singer Yunus Balcioglu broaden Erguner's play, and, as in "Twins", produce an "up-to-the-minute" dimension to the music.

### **10. Music directed by PAOLO FRESU. Pregadoria from Sonos 'e Memoria (from Act 9291-2)**

A "conjoining of all of Sardinia's musical instruments and styles, from past to present," is how trumpeter Paolo Fresu described the music on the "Sonos 'e Memoria CD. This Mediterranean island's best musicians assembled for the project, which has already achieved astounding success in its live version, a fascinating combination of the most authentic sounds possible and a historic film documentary. Traditional religious and secular music sung by the exceptional Sardinian vocalist Elena Ledda, is symbiotically combined with the improvisations of Fresu, accordionist Antonello Salis, and bassist Furio di Castri. "Pregadoria" is a stirring religious supplication.

### **11. PETER ERSKINE – NGUYỄN LÊ – MICHEL BENITA: Autumn Rose (from ACT 9289-2)**

Whoever has been following the goings-on in international jazz over the last 10 to 20 years might well give a whistle at hearing the names of Peter Erskine, the great drummer with the soft touch, Nguyễn Lê, the subtle electric guitar revolutionary, and Michel Benita, the energetic lyrical bassist. Under the initials "E-L-B" they form a trio that is one of the finest and most multi-dimensional groups in contemporary jazz. The three play together with a precision that is rich in subtle nuances. In their play, no one shows off; there are no bosses. It would take one a long time to find a more tender, delicate melody than their ballad "Autumn Rose" – and yet within its fragility there is incredible excitement and tension.

### **12. ACTRONIC: Hamlet # Belleforest (from ACT 9294-2 to be released October 2001)**

One person hides behind Actronic: guitarist-bassist-composer-electronic musician Bert Wrede has already drawn attention to himself as theater director and musician in the group "Frigg", which works under the Knitting Factory label. He produced the theater music for the Salzburg Festival 2000's production of "Hamlet", from which this piece is taken. ACT will release a complete CD from Actronic in the fall, 2001.

### **13. FRANK MÖBUS – DER ROTE BEREICH: Zambujeira do mar (from ACT 9286-2)**

The "...captivating anarcho-crew of contemporary jazz." (Bavarian Radio) has achieved an enormous media response in the last few months. With Frank Möbus (guitar), Rudi Mahall (bass clarinet) and John Schröder (drums), creativity starts at the point where others have left off. As in the CD's title piece, "Love Me Tender" bits of sound and noise swirl wildly through the air and re-assemble, metamorphosed. This impetuous force can also be very gentle and lyrical, as evidenced on, among others, "Zambujeira do mar": the muted outburst of an inner storm.

**14. NILS LANDGREN UNIT: Baby let Me Kiss You (from ACT 9292-2)**

For years this band has been one of the top live-attractions in jazz. Nils Landgren, the world-class Swedish trombonist with the metallic-red instrument (and artistic director for the 2001 Berlin Jazz Festival), whips up the rhythm, and sets the sounds into the groove mode. "The man delivers," wrote the Munich Daily News recently. That was already demonstrated in the ACT- Jazz-Classics recording of Landgren's "First Unit" from 1992, on which he also showed that he could sing.

**15. DAVID BINNEY: The Global Soul (from ACT 9279-2)**

The press acknowledged saxophonist-composer David Binney's first CD as a "Brilliant Debut" and a "jazz recording as artistic synthesis". With such classy cohorts as tenor saxophonist Chris Potter, pianist Uri Caine, bassist Scott Colley, and drummer Brian Blade, the Florida-born New York musician has recorded his own compositions. The compositions' exceptional, fine lines and the outstanding soloists combine for a fascinating, unified group concept. Tradition and innovation have seldom been brought together in so elegant and yet lively a fashion – as the brilliant "The Global Soul" so urgently demonstrates.

**16. SIDSEL ENDRESEN-BUGGE WESSELTOFT. I Think It's Gonna Rain Today (from ACT 9004-2)**

For years, Singer Sidsel Endresen has been one of the most striking vocal interpreters in contemporary jazz. Her dark, quiet voice makes one shiver. Accompanied by the sparse piano playing of Bugge Wesseltoft, she molds the American songwriter and film music composer Randy Newman's bitter-sweet ballad "I Think It's Gonna Rain Today" into her own. It is a timeless piece about mankind's despair, sung with such soul that one feels there is still reason to hope. (from the ACT-CD "Nightsong")

**17. ACTRONIC. Frontside Backside (from ACT 9294-2 release date: October 2001)**

(see title number 12)

**18. EIRIK HEGDAL'S DINGOBATS. Slowhymn (from ACT 9295-2) release date: September 2001)**

They are a pioneering band that has already taken over the youthful Norwegian scene with their tense, exciting sound. Dingobats saxophonist-composer Eirik Hegdal studied at the Trondheim Jazz Conservatory, along with the three other members of this quartet. They are all masters of long, lyrical lines that swing towards ecstasy. They extend the borders of jazz through unusual harmonies and tightly woven melodies. Their "Slowhymn" is an up-until-now unpublished recording.

**THE ULTIMATE ACT WORLD JAZZ ANTHOLOGY : ON CD**

ACT 9230-2	A Little Magic In A Noisy World	- The ACT World Jazz Anthology Vol. I
ACT 9250-2	More Magic In A Noisy World	- The ACT World Jazz Anthology Vol. II
ACT 9270-2	Magic World	- The ACT World Jazz Anthology Vol. III
ACT 9280-2	Magic Moments	- The ACT World Jazz Anthology Vol. IV

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