

10/08/13 By Karen Brundage-Johnson

The New Gary Burton Quartet - The Right Vibes

70th Birthday Concert Tour - October 6 - Zellerbach Theatre

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The Zellerbach Theatre in Philadelphia welcomed seven-time Grammy award winner, Gary Burton and the New Gary Burton Quartet. Burton is celebrating his 70th birthday year with an extended tour, a new album entitled "Guided Tour," featuring new music composed by all the members of the band, as well as an autobiography entitled "Learning to Listen" In his new book, Burton shares his fifty years of experiences at the top of the jazz scene. The quartet includes Julian Lage on guitar, Grammy award winner Antonio Sanchez on drums and Scott Colley on bass.

The opening number was described by Burton as "probably" one of the first Latin-jazz tunes ever written - "Afro Blue", composed by percussionist Mongo Santamaria. The quartet began this selection as a Tango, then shifted to a more standard jazz rhythm.

The next tune, "Never The Same Way", composed by bassist Scott Colley from the album "Common Ground", offered an invigorating tempo and an intense melody, played first by guitarist Julian Lage and then in unison by Lage and Burton. Burton's remarkable four-mallet technique blended notes and chords within the same phrase.

Burton then led the group in "Remember Tano," a Tango he wrote in honor of his mentor, Argentinean composer Astor "Tano" Piazzolla. This beautiful ballad showed off Burton's mastery of his four-mallet technique playing chords similar to a piano's.

Lage, contributed an original composition entitled "The Lookout," featuring an intricate melody alongside slick snare-and-bass drum thunder from drummer Antonio Sanchez. Sanchez, incorporated Swing, Funk and Latin influences into this selection.

The second set featured original by all of the musician, from the new album, including drummer Antonio Sanchez's opening "Caminos," with its sharp rhythmic turns and Burton's own fanciful Jazz waltz "Jane Fonda Called Again". Burton added that he sometimes comes up with "quirky" titles for his compositions. Sanchez's "Monkfish," was a swift, finger-popping, toe-tapping swing tune featuring drums and bass duel that had you on the edge of your seat.

Lage was featured on what appeared to be an unidentifiable solo that combined elements of jazz, classical and rock music. Lage showed off his skill at simultaneously playing chords alongside a grooving bass line. Then the tune segued into "My Funny Valentine," as the rest of the band returned to the stage. The audience was on their feet.

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The quartet treated the audience to an encore paying tribute to the legendary jazz vibraphonist Milt Jackson on "Bags' Groove. Overall, the entire performance was fresh, dazzling and provided the audience with an awesome evening of Jazz standards and original compositions.

Now in its forty-second season, The Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts of the University of Pennsylvania is a major cultural destination and crossroads in the performing arts, with information available at <http://www.pennpresents.org>

More photos from the performance are in Ben Johnson's photo gallery <http://www.benjohnsonjazzphotos.com>

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