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WITH CHRISTIAN McBRIDE AND BRIAN BLADE

PREVIEW ◀

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Chucho Valdés - Solo de piano

Saturday, October 4, 2014 -The Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts



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On Saturday, October 4th the legendary multi-Grammy Award winner Cuban pianist, composer, arranger and bandleader Chucho Valdés, performed an outstanding solo performance at the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, located at the University of Pennsylvania. This performance marked the conclusion of his national tour. Chucho Valdés has been a key figure in the evolution of Afro-Cuban jazz for the past 50 years.

Valdés played with amazing versatility on his original composition, “Mambo Influenciado” and the bolero “Esta Tarde Vi Llover” on which Valdés poured on some heavy Afro-Cuban rhythms. Valdés made us catch our breaths when he launched into Thelonious Monk’s “Blue Monk” first then into a lightning fast version of Chick Corea’s “Spain”. We could hear the reverberation of the piano strings.

Valdes' rhythmic ambidextrous technique added much excitement to the performance. At one point during a Frédéric Chopin composition, he plays Chopin-like with his left hand and simultaneously plays Latin rhythms with his right hand. Just as the beautiful lyricism of "Besame Mucho" he came back with "People" a Barbara Streisand tune that had the crowd smiling. Valdés mentioned that he was inspired by Duke Ellington and paid tribute featuring "A-Train" and an original composition entitled "Duke".

During his final few moments onstage Valdés stopped playing, mid-phrase, to issue an instructive to the audience. He teased out a Gershwin medley that playfully changed into the Cuban standard "El Manisero." The audience was elated as they started clapping four beats to a bar. Immediately, his hands lifted from the keyboard to clap a son clave: one, two, three, one-two. He transferred this pattern to the keyboard, encouraging the audience to follow his lead.

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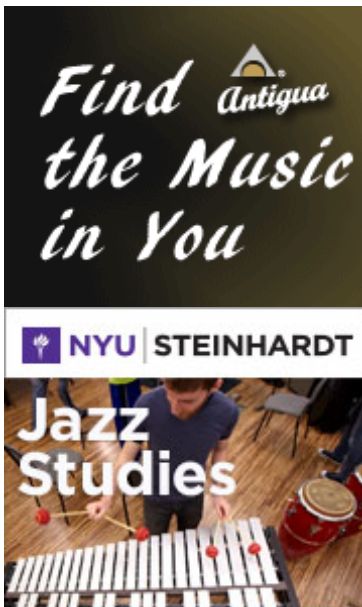
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