



OBLIQSOUND TO RELEASE ALON YAVNAI'S TRAVEL NOTES MAY 13

Grammy-Winning Pianist Acclaimed For His Work With Paquito D'Rivera Sets Out On Own Musical Journey With Debut As A Leader

Drawing on the rich musical tapestry of influences and aptitudes that fueled a six-year long working relationship with Paquito D'Rivera, earning both a Grammy nomination and – just this January – a Grammy win for their collaborative efforts, pianist Alon Yavnai is set to release Travel Notes, his debut as a leader. The album releases in the USA and Canada on May 13 on ObliqSound.

Travel Notes, filled with an assortment of solo piano compositions and trio collaborations with bassist Omer Avital and percussionist/drummer Jamey Haddad, is the result of the pianist's constant internal dialogue and exploration of his roots. The album, the tenth release in ObliqSound's Instrumental Series, features improvisations inspired by Israeli melodies, as well as the pianist's rendition of composer Shlomo Gronich's "Shir Ahava Tari (Fresh Love Song)", and eight original compositions. Travel Notes showcases Yavnai's abilities as a composer, a solo pianist and interpreter/arranger of traditional songs.

Veering from the predictability of the standard jazz trio format, Haddad performs on the trio tracks on a variety of percussion instruments instead of a drum kit. The effect, on songs such as "Ilha B'nit (Beautiful Island)," influenced by the Bandeira Rhythm from Cape Verde, and "Yonatan," dedicated to Yavnai's son, is subtle and intimate, as akin to chamber music as it is to jazz or world.

Travel Notes, with its trio and solo piano pieces, reflect cultures as varied as South American and Middle Eastern. The son of an Argentinean mother and an Israeli father, Yavnai was born in Israel, where he was raised and studied music in his formative years. The album is a complete reflection of Yavnai, personally and musically, says ObliqSound co-founder and album producer Michele Locatelli. "Alon's family converses in four languages. The multicultural milieu that is embedded in Alon's experiences comes through very clearly on every song."

Yavnai's time on the road, with well known artists such as Yo-Yo Ma, Joe Lovano, Freddie Hubbard, Nancy Wilson, Rosa Passos and with lesser known, but no less impressive musicians such as the producer/songwriter and cultural ambassador Ramiro Mendes (Cesaria Evora), has also contributed to the rich tapestry of musical influences that permeate Travel Notes. On songs such as the disc's title track, the percussive and melodic ambiance of North Africa is stirred into Yavnai's heady cultural mix. "That song is in 12/8 time, which uses the basic pattern of the Peruvian Festejo, and since 12/8 rhythm is played in many other countries, it has a bit of influence from Moroccan music in the percussion. Jamey is actually playing with brushes that he bought in Morocco, and he is very familiar with this music. Omer plays out on this track, which really gives the song a Middle Eastern flavor."

The album's title is a nod to the drafted sheet music that he always carries with him while performing around the world, and a reference to the resulting musical creations serving as a travel diary.

"Alon is widely acknowledged for his virtuosity, for being able to bring his talents to support other artists as a sideman," adds Locatelli. "On Travel Notes, he finally gets a chance to musically portray who he is – a composer, a pianist, and a leader in his own right."

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