

Review for album "**Back to Source**", release date: December 2009.

"On the piano, Embon is highly adept at utilizing the entire length of the keyboard with both hands playing rhythmically difficult melodies independent of each other. High energy hemiola begins in the opener "Krasula" with the left hand pounding out a steady syncopated bass line and the right hand freely playing complex, sometimes dissonant chords. The rapid key and modal changes are admirable as Embon weaves the bass line in and out of the song, eventually closing the tune slowly and quietly, most likely so the listener can get a chance to catch its breath.

Not every piece exudes such an intense musical onslaught. Embon displays more of his classical influence on "High Flown Skies" with quick scalar runs ornamented with turns and mordents. "Embracement" is a more straight ahead standard jazz number with a descending bass line, less busyness in the right hand and big rolling piano finish.

All dozen tracks on *Back to Source* are original works. Exclusively instrumental pieces have the challenge of transporting the listener where the composer is with only the melody and the title of the song as a reference. "Awakening" does a fine job of painting this aural picture with its slow, peaceful beginning before picking up the tempo, just like your brain would function as you awoke from a dream. The opening refrain is dropped repeatedly throughout the song just as if throughout the day one took a moment to reflect back upon that dream. On the contrary, "Noontime Rest" is hardly restful with its slightly offbeat bossa nova percussion and vigorous piano solos.

The majority of the songs are for solo piano; however Embon adds minimal instrumentation to a few numbers. "Through My Window" includes bass guitar, but its tone and disjunctive melody does not meld nicely with the piano. However, the bass guitar is redeemed in "The Way We Were," a romantic ballad where the piano and bass alternate accompanying each other. In "As the Day Begins" not only does Embon display a lovely, softer tone but he is joined by a tenor saxophone that emanates a tastefully bright sound to offset the mellow piano. "Something to Dream About" though is a disappointment. The song begins with a fun mix of hand percussion and minimalist piano work, but is then joined by a poorly sounding synthesizer string patch. This electronic music detracts greatly from the overall quality of Embon's work".

Overall, *Back to Source* delivers a fine package of complicated piano jazz and is a fine display of Pablo Embon's immense talent.

Kelly O'Neil - Review You (Nov 13, 2009)