



*El Siempre Mar*

Emilio Solla/Antonio Lizana (Tiger Turn)

*Será Niebla*

Nicolás Politzer (ears&eyes)

*Fertile Garden*

Rob Brown/Juan Pablo Carletti (NoBusiness)

by Russ Musto

This month's Argentinian National Independence Day (Jul. 9) prompts an examination of three albums, each including a different musician from that nation.

*El Siempre Mar* is the one most apropos to the subject at hand, in that it features the shared leadership of Emilio Solla, a pianist from Argentina, and Antonio Lizana, a saxophonist/vocalist who hails from Spain, the country from which Argentina gained its freedom more than 200 years ago. Largely a quartet date, with Peruvian bassist Jorge Roeder and Hungarian drummer/percussionist Ferenc Nemeth rounding out the band, it is truly an international affair, merging North American jazz with Argentine tango and Spanish flamenco in breathtaking fashion.

The date opens with "El Arriero", on which (over a gamboling flamenco beat) Lizana passionately intones the melancholy lyric by Argentine folk musician Atahualpa Yupanqui, about the plight of a mule driver, after which he digs in on tenor sax. Solla follows, soloing with lyrical fluidity before the singer returns to close things out in a more upbeat fashion. "Zamba Para No Morir" references the elegant Argentine tango form (not to be confused with Brazilian samba) and features

Lizana's mournful vocal and tenor backed by the trio with a guest string quartet. The pianist's "Vidalia—Buenos Aires Blues" is an ominous outing: Lizana sings and plays over the composer's dark percussive pizzicato solo. Solla then takes over, backed by hand drumming by Nemeth, before a climactic vocal-drums duet brings the piece to a close.

The spirit of tango is fittingly evinced on Astor Piazzolla's "Siempre Se Vuelve A Buenos Aires". Argentina-born vocalist Roxana Amed makes a guest appearance, along with the string quartet, on her original "Lejos De Casa", a beautiful ballad on the subject of being far from home. "La Piedras" dances with delight, Solla turning in a bright solo and Lizana alternating on soprano sax and voice, as he does again on Solla's poignant arrangement of the Chick Corea classic titled in Spanish: "Silencio De Cristal", on which he doubles on Fender Rhodes and piano and Lizana sings his original lyric. "Hurry" is a vivacious jazz waltz on which the four individuals prove their mastery of the idiom, traversing varied tempos. Lizana gracefully sings of love and longing on "Una Realidad Diferente", complemented by his wailing soprano. Solla's "El Otro Mar" opens with Lizana's voice and Roeder's bass poetically duetting, before piano and drums dynamically join them for a dramatic conclusion.

Two more dates featuring Argentine drummers lean toward avant garde jazz. On *Sera Nieblá*, Nicolás Politzer makes his debut leading a trio with fellow Argentinians Santiago Leibson (piano and electronics) and Maximiliano Kirsznern (bass). His "Sitio" opens the date ethereally, before gradually increasing in intensity; Leibson's playing variously suggests the influences of Paul Bley, Mal Waldron and Cecil Taylor.

Kirzner's "Trama" finds the band traveling further out into space, synthesizer and drums enveloping the bassist's warm sound as the song develops narrative intrigue. "Momo" begins quietly and unfolds deliberately, with rumbling malleted drums contrasting with upper register piano notes to create an air of tension that would serve well as a murder mystery soundtrack. The more songlike "Figueras" and "Gualicho" demonstrate the musicians' ability to meld into a singular unit, while the title track (translated as "there will be fog") is Politzer's homage to the late Argentine author Rodolfo Fogwill. On "Raída", the band engages in expansive free improvisation before the date finishes with Leibson's freebopping "Vicuña Porto".

*Fertile Garden*, by stalwart Downtown alto saxophonist Rob Brown and Argentine drummer Juan Pablo Carletti, is a *tour de force* studio album that captures the intensity of their frequent live duo performances. The date opens with "6BC", an episodic piece spanning 33 minutes, during which the pair improvise with inspired abandon. Brown's distinctively tart sax traverses a wide array of sonic identities, flowing narratively as it interacts with Carletti's idiosyncratic drumming, as he alternates between mallets, sticks and brushes to create a constantly evolving tonal palette. Subtle and jarring shifts in tempo contribute greatly to the piece's exhilarating character. The second (and only other) track, the lengthy (23 minutes) "Children's Magical Garden", similarly offers a smoothly developing improvisational adventure; it's a bit more relaxed than the opener, but no less engaging.

For more info visit [emiliosolla.com](http://emiliosolla.com), [earsandeyesrecords.com](http://earsandeyesrecords.com) and [nobusinessrecords.com](http://nobusinessrecords.com). Juan Pablo Carletti is at Main Drag Music Jul. 19. See Calendar.

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