

Enrico Rava New York Days

Enrico Rava: trumpet; **Mark Turner:** tenor saxophone; **Stefano Bollani:** piano; **Larry Grenadier:** double-bass; **Paul Motian:** drums

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New York City has always had a special place in the affections of Italian trumpet master Enrico Rava, and not merely in its time-honoured capacity as the globe's jazz capital. After early adventures in Europe with Gato Barbieri and Steve Lacy, Rava followed them to New York in 1967 and ended up staying for six years, taking part in the musical upheavals of the period, participating in some epochal recordings, and forming his first bands as a leader. Identified now as one of the architects of a European and specifically 'Italian' improvising sensibility, Rava shaped his musical identity in New York, and American jazz remains forever his first love and frame of reference. When he speaks of the thinking behind "New York Days", an album recorded in NYC early last year, he cites the influence of both Duke Ellington and Miles Davis – Duke for writing music "specifically for the individual players" and Miles "for not writing too much at all!". In brief: some well chosen notes and a lot of trust in all the participants. "I give the melodies and chords, a few lines to indicate arrangements...and if the musicians choose to play something else instead, I'm happy. The beauty of this music is its capacity to surprise." Saxophonist Mark Turner notes, Rava knows how to "generate a great deal of content from a little information – that's actually very hard to do, and Enrico does it so well."

A little information but much intertwined history: the quintet heard here came together for this session, but there are numerous interconnections between the players. Stefano Bollani has been associated with Rava since the early 1990s, and has acknowledged Enrico as his mentor. Rava encouraged the prodigiously gifted pianist, then active in both pop and classical contexts, to commit himself fully to jazz. Bollani has since gone on to become, in the view of many critics, the most outstanding jazz pianist of his generation. His recordings with Rava include the quintet album "Easy Living", "Tati"(trio with Paul Motian) and the duo album "The Third Man" .

Before "Tati", Rava and drummer Paul Motian had crossed paths on many occasions over the years. Both are on Carla Bley's epic "Escalator Over the Hill" (1968-71), for instance, and both toured in a Joe Henderson Quintet at the end of the 1980s. Bassist Larry Grenadier has worked a lot with Motian (including Paul's Trio 2000), and first played with Bollani some eight years ago, jamming also with Rava back then. Mark Turner and Larry Grenadier have played extensively together in the trio Fly, and Mark has played with Rava as a guest on Italian concerts...

The relationship between the two hornmen, Rava and Turner, is one of the immediately arresting aspects of "New York Days". Turner, who makes his ECM debut here, has strong conceptual roots in Warne Marsh as well as Coltrane and his thoughtful, analytical lines contrast strikingly with Rava's generous lyricism. The ever-resourceful Bollani is able to bridge both approaches in his harmonic language and extend ideas from both players in his own solo statements. It's a two way process. Bollani praises Enrico's attentiveness: "From the very first time we played together, in 1996, there was always an exchange of ideas, and it was

immediately clear that Enrico was listening as closely to me as I was to him. That was inspiring and encouraging. “

Larry Grenadier, best known perhaps for his contributions to the groups of Brad Mehldau and Pat Metheny, takes seriously the bass roles of inspiring and energizing a band. He has long enjoyed opportunities to share rhythm section duties with Paul Motian: “Paul’s one of the greatest drummers and musicians I’ve ever played with. He approaches the drums with a childlike innocence combined with an incredibly rooted sense of bebop tradition.” Motian has had a lifelong commitment to “making it new” and remains amongst the most unpredictable, and most poetic, of drummers, splintering the beat and reassembling it in ever-changing shapes. Paul once said that, of all the musicians he has played with, he has been most influenced by Thelonious Monk: Monk’s extreme originality as well as his fondness for sudden rhythmic displacements find a deep echo in Motian’s work.

Between the two grand masters, Motian at the drum kit and Rava in the frontline, the younger players of the quintet find their space. Enrico: “I like musicians within my bands to have the maximum freedom possible.” Together the ensemble creates music of ‘timeless’ quality, informed by jazz history (the Rava/Turner combination in particular suggests at times a cross-referencing of the ‘schools’ of Miles and Tristano), but also very much of the present.

“New York Days” was produced by Manfred Eicher at Avatar Studios, New York, in February 2008.

biographical notes:

Enrico Rava was born in Trieste in 1939. Self-taught, he started out playing Dixieland trombone but switched to trumpet at 18 after hearing Miles Davis. In 1962, he began a collaboration with Gato Barbieri, which brought him into contact with Don Cherry, Mal Waldron and Steve Lacy. He joined Lacy’s group in 1965, subsequently traveling with him through Europe, South America and the US. In New York, Rava worked with Cecil Taylor, the Jazz Composers Orchestra, and Roswell Rudd; back in Europe he hooked up with the European avant-garde and the free players of the Globe Unity Orchestra. Even in this experimental period Rava remained a melodic player, a tendency refined and developed through a career which has touched on all aspects of the jazz tradition. First ECM album “The Pilgrim and the Stars” in 1975 already set high standards has won many national and international awards, including, in 2002, the JazzPar prize, Europe’s biggest award for jazz players.

Stefano Bollani was born in Milan in 1972, and began playing piano at 6, enrolling in Florence’s Cherubini Conservatory five years later. First professional performances at 15, initially in pop contexts; work with Enrico Rava from 1996 confirmed a deeper commitment to jazz. Since then he has played with numerous musicians including Lee Konitz, Phil Woods, Michel Portal, Gato Barbieri, Richard Galliano etc. ECM recordings with Rava since 2003, own album “Piano Solo” in 2006. Awards include European Jazz Prize 2007. Has written for ensembles of all sizes, collaborated with Brazilian musicians, and published a novel (“La Sindrome di Brontolo”, 2006). He recently recorded a piano trio album for ECM with Jesper Bodilsen and Morten Lund, for 2009 release.

Mark Turner was born in Fairborn, Ohio in 1965. Moved with his family to California when he was four. Turner started playing clarinet at nine then later switched to alto, then tenor as a teenager. He studied art at Long Beach State and California College of Arts and Crafts,

transferring to Berklee College of Music, and graduating in 1990. Since moving to New York he has worked and recorded with musicians such as Kurt Rosenwinkel, Dave Holland, Paul Motian, Brad Mehldau, John Pattitucci, Dave Douglas, Billy Hart, Lee Konitz and James Moody. He is on dozens of recordings as a sideman as well as five of his own recordings (“Yam Yam” on Criss Cross, “Mark Turner”, “In This World”, “Ballad Session” and “Dharma Days” on Warner Brothers).

Larry Grenadier was born in San Francisco in 1966. He began playing bass when he was 11, as teenager working in the Bay area with Joe Henderson, Stan Getz, Bobby Hutcherson among many others. He graduated from Stanford University in 1989 with a degree in English Literature. After playing with Gary Burton's band in 1990, he moved to New York City where he played in the bands of Betty Carter, Joshua Redman, Danilo Perez, Tom Harrell, Joe Henderson, John Scofield, Pat Metheny, Paul Motian, Charles Lloyd and Brad Mehldau and recorded dozens of albums. Currently he is also a member of the collective trio, Fly, along with Mark Turner and Jeff Ballard. Their first recording for Savoy was released in January 2004. Their newest recording will be issued on ECM later this year. Previous ECM credits include three albums with Charles Lloyd: “The Water Is Wide”, “Hyperion With Higgins” and “Lift Every Voice”.

Paul Motian was born in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1931. After studying at the Manhattan School of Music in the 1950s he worked briefly with Thelonious Monk, Sonny Rollins and Lennie Tristano. With Bill Evans he helped to chart new directions for modern jazz, as he would continue to do in the groups of two other pianists– Paul Bley and Keith Jarrett. ECM encouraged him to record as a leader with “Conception Vessel” (1972), the first of many albums featuring Motian’s own music. Since 1984 and the album “It Should Have Happened A Long Time Ago” he has led a trio with Bill Frisell and Joe Lovano, whose 21st century releases include “I Have The Room Above Her” and “Time And Time Again.” “Garden of Eden” features the Paul Motian Band, whose line-up includes three electric guitars and the saxes of Tony Malaby and Chris Cheek. Other recent ECM dates include sessions with pianists Marilyn Crispell, Bobo Stenson and Anat Fort, as well as “Tati” with Enrico Rava and Stefano Bollani.

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Tour: Enrico Rava is currently preparing to take the music from “New York Days” on the road, with a tour line-up including Stefano Bollani, Larry Grenadier and Jeff Ballard. Concerts – in Italy, Switzerland, Spain and Germany include: Teatro Kennedy, Fasano (January 29), Sacile, Teatro Zancanaro (January 30). Turin Auditorium Rai (January 31), Rome Auditorium (February 1), Geneva, Victoria Hall (February 2), Barcelona, BCN Auditori (February 4), Poggibonsi (February 5), Correggio, Teatro Asioli (February 6), Vicenza (February 7), Hamburg, Schauspielhaus (February 8). In March the Rava group plays a week at New York’s celebrated Birdland club, returning the music of “New York Days” to its inspirational source.