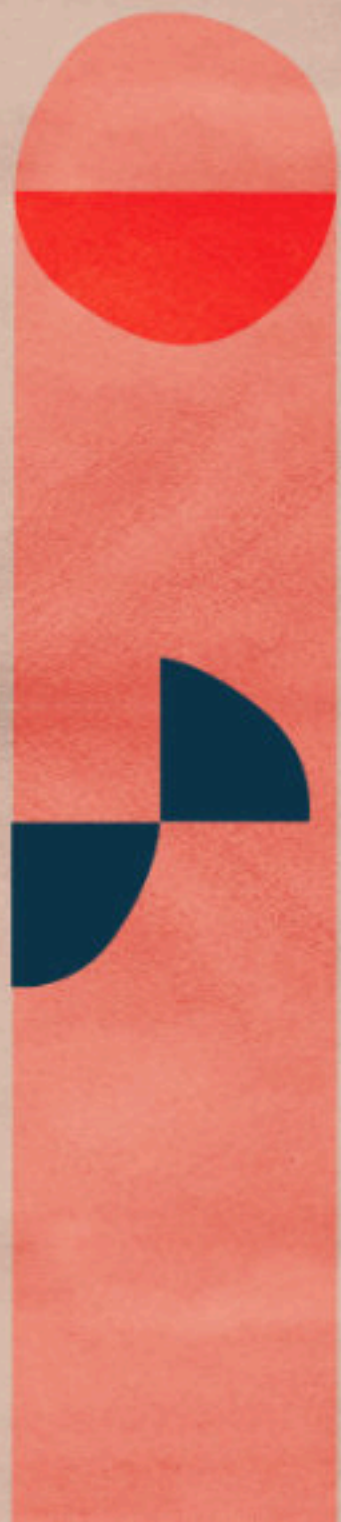



/RODRIGO RECABARREN
/PABLO MENARES
/YAGO VAZQUEZ
FAMILIA





f it takes a village to support and sustain a Jazz trio, then what better way to acknowledge that cherished sense of community than with a marvelous piece of art. In the case of drummer Rodrigo Recabarren, pianist Yago Vazquez and bassist Pablo Menares, that takes the form of their new trio album *Famila*. Having played together for more than a decade, refining a chemistry and musical telepathy that defines their signature sound, *Famila* is the consummate expression of this talented trio, as well as the kinship they feel for each other, their collective families and the larger community supporting their music.

Hailing from Chile, (Recabarren and Menares) and Galicia, Spain (Vazquez) these young artists embed a wealth of cultural experiences to their musical dexterity. Paying tribute to the music of their childhoods, the trio utilizes a variety of folkloric musical traditions into an album that like many within Pan-Latin Jazz, hybridizes various cultural attributes into compositions that reflect the complexities of our modern world. Fearless, comfortable with a variety of genres and styles of music, a deep trust and confidence binds their collective musical ambitions.

Migrating to New York City in 2009, Recabarren and Menares quickly found themselves in similar social circles as students and artists navigating the magnetic pulse of the Jazz capital of the US. Soon they bumped into Vazquez and began sharing a collective passion for “futbol,” food, family, and the burgeoning dynamic of how well they collaborated together. As a young trio, Recabarren quickly discovered that his bass and piano playing companions had a very unique way of communicating musically. “It's kind of like telepathy,” Recabarren describes, adding “they just accept each other. It's just like a conversation with a good group of friends and a bottle of wine.” For the trio, Familia is an expression of shared mutual experiences but also the curiosity required to explore how personal identity shapes the music they wish to explore. As Recabarren sees it, “there are few things more important than identity. I moved to the states to learn about US folklore and in the process I found myself.”

Below the surface of musical journeys like Familia are the personal and cultural attributes that make Pan-Latin Jazz so special. Each song, rhythm, chord structure or melody is an opportunity to explore one's life through the prism of the vast experiences that shape a musical personality. For Recabarren and Menares, that's all things Chile, with its treasure trove of folkloric traditions like “chin-chin” street rhythms or the musical legacies of icons like Violeta Parra and Víctor Jara that percolated throughout their childhood under Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship. Meanwhile Vazquez is innately connected to Galicia's rich cultural history. In both cases you'll find seasoned musicians negotiating their way through Jazz en

route to resurrecting a sincere appreciation for their cultural homelands.

Take for example *Santiago*, the song that opens the album. Named after Recabarren's son, it's built on the phenomenon of Colombia's cumbia beat, illustrating the glorious ways the trio combines Latin rhythmic structures with the melodic sensibilities of contemporary Jazz. Vazquez's composition *Terra* (Galician for "land") floats between the region's popular 3/4 *xota* rhythm, and the 6/8 energy of the *chacarera* beat that reverberates throughout Argentina. Always layered, featuring glimpses of the various influences the trio has absorbed to date, *Familia* continues with *Ritual*, a reflective meditation on Menares' interpretation of the "sacred quality of studying, practicing and making music."

Metered as if marking the passage of time itself, *Aninovo* (*New Year's Day*) celebrates the life of Vazquez's grandfather who miraculously was born and passed away on January 1st several decades apart. Sticking with a pensive theme is Menares' *Viaje*, his introspective journey inspired by *caporales*, the Bolivian folklore dance that neatly utilizes 3/4 and 6/8 time signatures within the 4/4 melodic framework of the song. As Menares describes it, "no matter where you go, you bring your roots with you. There's always rhythms like this within the background of your life." And apparently waterways too as *Minho*, the river dividing Galicia and Portugal, provides the picturesque background for a gorgeous ballad that flows as mercurially as the tributary it portrays.

Next we travel to *Castro*, a central park district within the city of Vigo, the site of the prehistoric landscape where the first inhabitants of Galicia settled. Lively and spirited, Vazquez uses this playful musical backdrop to describe the joy he's experienced within the expansive garden his family and friends have gathered for years. Originally penned as a song to commemorate his life partner, Recabarren's *Lazo* gets a gentle nudge from the arranging chops of Menares and Vazquez and a faint harmonious nod to the band Radiohead. *Familia* ends with *Después de Todo (After All)*, an artful finish incorporating the harmonic nuance of "Guinga" or the musical stylings of the legendary composer, guitarist and vocalist Carlos Althier de Souza Lemos Escobar. It also speaks to the written work of the Chilean author Jorge Teillier, whose poem by the same name speaks to the influence of the community of relationships we nurture within our lifetimes.

Which elegantly brings us back to the theme of family. And not just blood relatives, but families of choice; families that help shape our identities, mold our creative passions and then see that those aspirations are brought to life. "We all migrated to NYC together and created a family," Recabarren recalls, remembering the years spent learning about themselves as much as they did mastering the mechanics of Jazz. For the trio, Jazz has been the vehicle of choice to engage and explore the total circumference of their musical lives. "I think Jazz does that to people" Recabarren believes. "It's a language that allows you to explore beauty, subjects in depth, and I think that I'm realizing this through this album as well."