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FreeFind**Review and More****Aldo****Our Review****Merriment**

Summary: *Jazz that is neither traditional nor smooth, with a rollicking rock quality*

**Artist link**

Label: Power Note Productions

Length: 49 minutes

Genre: Jazz

Release: 2005

Track List

Song Title
Carol of the Bells
Midnight Clear
We Three Kings
I Wonder As I Wander
Nöel
O Holy Night
I Saw Jeannette Torch Three Ships
Whose Child Was That?!
March of the Toys
Emmanuel

Aldo's *Merriment* took me by surprise. Hearing it reminded me of the first time I heard Mannheim Steamroller's *Christmas* more than 20 years ago--I immediately sat up and took notice, thinking "Now *this* is something truly special!" I made the mistake of first hearing *Merriment* in my car on the way to work. Fortunate that the cops did not pull me over for "reckless driving," I was bopping big time in the driver's seat, and my 25-mile commute across the metropolitan area flashed by. And when I cranked up my audio system at work, I had the office early birds flocking to my location, wanting to know the artist and album name!

This jazz is neither traditional nor smooth; it has a rollicking rock quality that makes it utterly irresistible. The jubilant music is gripping, but not hard-edged. Aldo's passion for the music is apparent with every stroke of the piano key; his "merry men" on upright bass and drums are equally outstanding. This little ensemble carried me away!

Merriment contains ten beefy tracks, five of which are at least five minutes in length (many holiday tunes expire after only two or three!). The album opens with a most amazing rendition of "Carol of the Bells"; the opening bars immediately recall "Hit the Road, Jack." This album just takes off and is consistently impressive throughout. Other great moments include Aldo's terrific take on "March of the Toys"; its riveting, hard-charging foundation will make you see those toys on the march, and its poetic bass interlude is wonderful. This holiday music is entirely familiar, but the season's well-worn chestnuts burst with new

life. Aldo's arrangements are priceless, and the musicianship and production values are first-rate.

Aldo's sense of humor and creativity extend beyond the marvelous music itself. For one thing, the cover art is great with both front and back featuring Aldo looking forlorn, stuck outside while snowmen are managing the jazz ensemble inside the house. The track titles are also creative, especially "I Saw Jeannette Torch Three Ships" and "Whose Child Was That?!"

Merriment is compelling jazz-rock that is fun and fresh! Not surprisingly, I give Aldo's album my highest recommendation. What are you waiting for?

--Carol Swanson
(Reviewed in 2005)

More

From the liner notes:

Musicians:
Piano: Aldo
Drums: Michael Pilhofer & Matt Weaver
Percussion: Aaron Barnell
Bass: Greg Angel & Dave Berg

Arranged and Produced by Aldo

From the Web site:

Aldo and his "merry men" have put together a new and exciting arrangement of some classic holiday tunes for piano, double bass, and drums. Guaranteed to put you in the holiday spirit!

These toe-tapping arrangements are fun to listen to year-round.

He is the Midwest's newest musical treasure. The piano is his true love. His music is the result. Together, we find "Treasures of the Soul" and "Hunter of Dreams", a collection of Aldo's original compositions of endless flowing piano music with orchestral undertones, coming straight from his soul.

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