

Midiri Brothers Sextet. A Shaw Thing, MID Records, 14 Selections, TT = XXX

Having made the Benny Goodman Sextet book an integral part of their band library, the Midiri Brothers turns in most part to the Artie Shaw repertoire for their new CD.

In doing so, the Midiris dip into both Artie's Gramercy Five bag as well as his big band book and since it's the Midiri Brothers were talking about, the Midiris are the Midiris and that equates to a top-of-the line recording.

Before you think you're getting a steady diet of Shaw, rest easy or get teary-eyed, depending on your point of view, Eight of the tracks are on the Gramercy Five kick, three are associated with Artie's orchestra and the others are, well, others.

The others, for example, include a joyous romp, "Sacramento Blues," recorded live at last year's Sacramento Jazz Jubilee, and vibraphonist Paul Midiri's elegant take of "Rain," also recorded in Sacramento. The sextet also revisits BG's "Airmail Special," a showpiece for Joe Midiri's nimble clarinet, abetted in no small part by trumpeter Dan Tobias and a rock-solid rhythm section: pianist Joe Holt, guitarist Gary Cattley, drummer Jim Lawlor and bassist Gary Cattley.

The main thrust remains Shaw, however, which is obvious when the sextet digs into beguiling readings of "Stardust," "Begin The Beguine" and "The Carioca", all played oh so frequently by Shaw's full orchestra.

Just as familiar are such Gramercy Five faves as "Summit Ridge Drive," replete with harpsichord massaged by Holt, a very swinging "My Blue Heaven" and the pulsating "Cross My Heart."

“Scuttlebutt” and “The Chaser” added to the Shaw library later and perfect vehicles for the unison sound created by the Midiri sibs while the title track isn’t Shaw at all but instead a Shaw-like composition by Tobias and “Go Harlem” is P. Midiri’s arrangement of a James P. Johnson selection.

Just a small hang-up with the recording. Since Shaw’s G5 did not employ a vibraphone, there are four tracks on which P. Midiri has no place to hang his mallets. Not to worry, though, the versatile Mr. M. simply moves into Lawlor’s drum throne for four numbers and then returns the sticks to him for other selections..

In sum, *A Shaw Thing* is a sure thing!

(For orders or information: e-mail – midirimusic@aol.com; internet – www.midribros.com; U.S. mail – Box 961, Mays Landing, N.J. 08330

GRADE: A +