

Review from Downbeat Magazine

Roberto Occhipinti - Yemaya ****

Canadian Bassist Roberto Occhipinti turns in an often dazzling set on his third album as a leader, recorded in Toronto, Moscow and Havana. Plus, two pieces are straight from Brazil: His bass sings in the lead on Djavan's "A Ilha," wrapped in the strings of the Globalis Symphony Orchestra and topped with Kevin Turcotte's gorgeous flugelhorn solo: and Occhipinti sounds the opening lines and high-flying first improvisation on "Maracatres" by Jovino Santos -Neto.

Yemaya is hardly a bass dominated project, though, as the emphasis is on the leader's arrangements, including his own compositions. This includes "Mank," with its tricky 5/4 meter and tricky, cross-cutting brass, woodwind and rhythm-section lines, and "El Otro Tipo," one of five tunes benefiting from the creative propulsion of drummer Dafnis Prieto.

The album also features the buoyant "Herbie's Mood" inspired by Hancock and penned by Cuba-born pianist Hilario Duran; and the light "Bernardo's Tango", a tribute to Italian film director Bertolucci, written by tenor saxophonist Phil Dwyer. Occhipinti send listeners off with "Yambu," an Afro-Cuban groove fest dedicated to the late drummer and percussionist Pancho Quinto.