



The Poetry of Places: Paula Shocron and Bjørn Solli

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There is something about places. A particular place can create a special mood. When it comes to music, a place can create a unique frame that adds inspiration and ambience. Just think of the music recorded at the Village Vanguard. The name itself is enough to send shivers down the spine.

However, unique musical places do not have to be connected with legendary venues. Sometimes, a surprising setting can have an equally enchanting effect and this is the case with the albums from Argentinian pianist Paula Shocron and Norwegian guitarist Bjørn Vidar Solli.

Paula Shocron Trio

Surya

Kuai Music

2014

Paula Shocron's name will be familiar to those listeners who have discovered Justo Lo Prete's Rivorecords. She has released three recommendable records in her own name on the label. Two with a trio and one solo piano record. The album *Surya* is another trio recording, but this time it is produced by herself and sees her moving in another direction than the standard-influenced repertoire on Rivorecords. Instead, the weight lies on Shocron's original compositions.

The album was recorded in the historical setting of Villa Ocampo that has been owned by UNESCO since 1973. The house, which is now a cultural center, radiates with the atmosphere of the many artists that visited that place, including the composer Igor Stravinsky and the author Albert Camus. In this poetic setting, Shocron has created a work that ties the threads between the present and the past. The echoes of yesterday linger on the trio's epic exploration of the standard "Angel Eyes" and "Coral" has the elegiac feeling of classical music. Shocron and her trio clearly know the musical styles of the past and respect them, but they are subtly deconstructing them as the name of one of the compositions, "Unblues," implies. The strict meter of the blues is taken apart in a glorious free-form composition with abrupt lines flowing like a river going in different directions, but suddenly bassist Juan Manuel Bayón plays with a straight walking bass pattern. It is this combination between a traditional way of swinging and a modernistic approach to the material that is characteristic of the trio.

Echoes of fellow pianists Andrew Hill and Thelonious Monk are heard in Shocron's playing, but her crystalline tone is all her own and her fellow musicians, drummer Bruno Varela and bassist Bayón, play with poetic empathy. As a special gesture, they receive two solo spotlights on the haiku-like "Reflejo," where Varela's percussion sings with sophistication, and "Supersol," with Bayón's muffled bass buzzing like a bee.

Surya simply shines with melodic invention and a sense of jazz history. It is fitting that an album filled with so much poetry and light should be created in such an artistic setting as the Villa Ocampo.