

- HOMEPAGE
- NEWS
- REVIEWS
- INTERVIEWS
- EVENTS
- PROFILES
- LINKS

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- ▶ Articles
- ▶ Radio Shows
- ▶ Internet Radio
- ▶ A/V Webcasts
- ▶ Jazz Festivals

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- ▶ Submit Review
- ▶ Submit Article

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- ▶ Credits

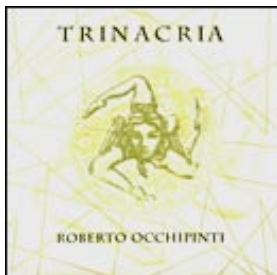
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ROBERTO OCCHIPINTI

Trinacria

2001 Modica Music

Review by Thomas Peña

On September 1, 2001, I had the pleasure of conversing with bass player Roberto Occhipinti about his latest recording, Trinacria. Roberto was performing with Jane Bunnett and the Spirits of Havana at the West Kortright Center for the Arts in East Meredith, New York ([see concert review](#)).

Roberto, who is of Sicilian ancestry, explained the symbolism behind the unusual title of his recording. "Trinacria is the ancient symbol for Sicily. The classical symbol for the island was three running legs (representing the three corners of Sicily) with the head of Medusa at its center."



The concept for Trinacria is Latin jazz that pays homage to its past, present and future. Featured are compositions by jazz legends Thelonius Monk and Herbie Hancock as well as original material by Roberto and Cuban pianist Hilario Durán.

The personnel are a diverse combination of veterans and up and coming young turks: Hilario Durán (piano,) Horacio "El Negro" Hernández (drums,) Yosvany Terry (tenor saxophone,) Dafnis Prieto (drums,) Phil Dwyer (tenor saxophone,) Hugh Marsh (violin), Juan Sánchez Oliva (percussion) and Mario Del Monte (percussion on track 2).



Roberto, a resident of Toronto, Canada has been an important member of Jane Bunnett's Spirits of Havana for five years. He has also recorded with Nelly Furtado, Array Music, John Cody, Esprit Quartet Orchestra, various salsa bands and Toronto's #1 soul band, Soul Stew. Roberto mentioned in passing that he began his career playing with R & B and funk bands.

Roberto's band demonstrates its polish and versatility with tunes such as "One Finger Snap" and Hilario Durán's beautiful arrangement of "Waiting for the Float." Pay particular attention to



the stunning violin solo on "Maiden Voyage," a jazz classic. I also enjoyed the contrasting styles of saxophonists Phil Dwyer (tracks 1-6) and Yosvany Terry (tracks 6-12). Dwyer's contemporary approach contrasts nicely with Terry's progressive style.

I enjoyed watching the mentor/student relationship between Roberto and the incredibly gifted 17-year-old Cuban pianist David Virelles on stage. The musical interaction (individually and collectively) was very interesting. After the performance, Roberto humorously explained that he was showing the spirited Virelles the ropes and "keeping him in line."

Roberto says his next project will be with a larger band - more orchestral. He mentioned the influence (and sound) of Gil Evans and his orchestra as the foundation for his concept. Evans is best known for his historic collaborations with Miles Davis, such as "Sketches of Spain" and "Porgy and Bess."



I highly recommend Trinacria and look forward to Roberto Occhipinti's future musical endeavors.

Songs:

1. **El Negro** - Composer: Roberto Occhipinti [[listen](#)]
2. **One Finger Snap** - Composer: Herbie Hancock [[listen](#)]
3. **Maiden Voyage** - Composer: Herbie Hancock
4. **El Negro Part 2** - Composer: Roberto Occhipinti
5. **Well You Needn't** - Composer: Thelonius Monk [[listen](#)]
6. **Trinacria** - Composer: Roberto Occhipinti [[listen](#)]
7. **Waiting for the Float** - Composer: Hilario Durán [[listen](#)]
8. **Nueva Generación** - Composer: Hilario Durán



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