

## **DOWNBEAT**

October 1997 Walt Weiskopf

Song For My Mother

Criss Cross 1127

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Jim Snidero

San Juan

Red 123265

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Snidero and Weiskopf are members of that mid-30s demographic of journeymen N.Y.C.-based players who, despite a good deal of activity and renown, remain under-recognized. Currently on an indie labels, these are the type of stalwart musicians the majors should document and support. Snidero, the altoist, is spotlighted on Song For My Mother, which is Weiskopf's third Criss Cross effort. On this winter 1995 session, Weiskopf fully, and intriguingly, employs his available timbres, craftily interweaving brass and reed lines. Three alto flutes state the dancing theme of "High Noon," underpinned by bass clarinet and brass.

The bracing "Barebones," a wild blues variant, has a gritty intro built off a baritone sax/brass ostinato; the theme from "End Of The Year So Soon" has delicate contrapuntal lines in its melody statement played by upper-register tenor, alto and flute. The leader's tenor is featured on each tune, and he improvises with his customary vigor and enterprise. He cherishes bebop but looks for other means of communication, mixing lines that have a pleasing meliflousness with those that are more agitated. On "Barebones," he places intense flurries against long, beseeching notes; on "Where Is Love," he exploits his appealing sound as he delivers sweet yet complex statements. The crew is first-rate.

Joe Magnarelli is a '90s Kenny Dorham: Using a big sound, he finds the hippest notes, no matter the context. Anders Bostrom is a European flutist who can swing handily, Conrad Herwig get a deliciously creamy bone tone, Joel Weiskopf is a splendid, inventive pianist and Scott Robinson is a remarkable baritonist and bass clarinetist. Peter Washington and Billy Drummond, a regular pair at Criss Cross, are so supportive; they exhilaratingly drive this music.

- Zan Stewart