

JOSEPH DIAMOND

Not Your Typical New Yorker

(Blue Nile Music)

Here's a different twist on Afro-Cuban jazz. New York-based pianist/composer Joseph Diamond has come up with *Not Your Typical New Yorker*: a CD with an easy and pleasant sound. It is "smooth Latin jazz" but it is not smooth in the "G" sense of the word. Beautiful melodies, easy and complex all once, interesting rhythms, sophisticated breaks, subtle but swinging percussion. And cool montunos over a base of light but swinging Afro-Cuban drums and bass make up the sound of this enjoyable recording.

Diamond's performance has a melodic approach that grooves with a Latin touch sprinkled with Brazilian, and classical. He is joined by a group of first-class musicians. Drummer Vince Cherico, currently in Ray Barretto's band, is one of the most sought-after Latin jazz drummers in the New York scene thanks to his precise and energetic delivery, and deep knowledge of the rhythms. Bassist Leo Traversa, former sideman to New York Voices, Tania Maria, and Astrud Gilberto, delivers an infectious *tumbao* in the hot pieces. 300. makes his instrument sing in the slower tunes. (Listen to his dazzling solo in the ballad "Little Past Midnight.") And Drew Francis does a superb job on tenor, flute, and keyboards.

The songs, all written by Diamond, range from lively *son-or-mambo-tinged* to soft, lulling melodies. The opening number, "Que Rico," and the title cut have a smooth but infectious Latin feel. "Cuchifrito" has a catchy and pleasant melody. "M & M" is also easy but yet, with interesting changes. And "Julia" is a lyrically beautiful piece with amazing potential, with an intro that alternates between 5/4 and 7/4 and a dazzling melody in 3/4.

Not Your Typical New Yorker is available at 888-239-6166, or at www.josphdiamond.com.

—Patricia A. J. B. / a