

Sammy Figueroa & His Latin Jazz Explosion

...and Sammy Walked In

Savant

(June 2005)

Review by Scott Yanow



Conguero/percussionist Sammy Figueroa heads a sextet on this date that sounds like a Latinized version of Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers. The music is essentially hard bop, featuring solos from trumpeter John Lovell, saxophonist John Michalak (who is replaced by Tyler Kuebler on two of the ten selections), and pianist Michael Orta. Of the lesser-known material, the "I Got Rhythm"-based "Eugenology" is most memorable and the other highlights include Cedar Walton's "Bolivia" and Chucho Valdés' "Mambo Influenciado." The final number, "Duermeté Mi Cielito," features Figueroa unaccompanied, singing and playing percussion. Hopefully Sammy Figueroa will be able to keep this accessible and swinging group together for many years, keeping alive the traditions of both Art Blakey and Tito Puente.

1	<u>Syncopá O No</u>	Díaz	4:27
2	<u>Niko's Dream</u>	Uman	7:48
3	<u>Bebé</u>	Pascoal	7:20
4	<u>And Sammy Walked In</u>	Camilo	4:44
5	<u>Eugenology</u>	Uman	4:21
6	<u>Mirage</u>	Lovell	6:19
7	<u>Bolivia</u>	Walton	6:33
8	<u>Swimming Gaia</u>	Uman	6:02
9	<u>Mambo Influenciado</u>	Valdés	4:43
10	<u>Duermeté Mi Cielito</u>	Figueroa	2:41