

NEWS RELEASE

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23-piece space-age pop big band Mr. Ho's Orchestrotica introduces the "Exotica for Modern Living" collection with debut album, *The Unforgettable Sounds of Esquivel*

Eleven of Esquivel's lost, Mad Men-era, stereophonic wiz-bang arrangements transcribed from the original big-band albums and re-recorded by artistic director and multi-percussionist Brian "Mr. Ho" O'Neill

Featuring a stellar lineup of horns including Yaure Muniz (Afro-Cuban All Star Big Band, Buena Vista Social Club), Paul Perfetti (Boston Pops, Les Miserables), Ken Pope (Boston Pops, Boston Ballet, BMOP), Chris Beaudry (R.I., Rochester Phil.), and Russ Gershon (Either/Orchestra)

"...a tribute to the art of subtle inflection and outsized attitude... one chill party."

— Joan Anderman, *The Boston Globe*

"...precise, complex, somewhat bizarre yet eminently catchy tunes."

— Bob Young, *The Boston Herald*

"A half delirious combination...tireless experimentation."

— La Crónica de Hoy (Mexico City)



Mr. Ho's Orchestrotica, the world's only ensemble dedicated to the space-age pop music of Juan Garcia Esquivel, releases its debut CD *The Unforgettable Sounds of Esquivel* on November 16, 2010. The first-ever big-band recording recreating Esquivel's long-lost arrangements, this CD, recorded live at Futura Productions in Roslindale, MA, was produced by cocktail music authority Brother Cleve (Del Fuegos, Combustible Edison, Jetset DJ). *The Unforgettable Sounds of Esquivel* features an all-star cast of 23 high fidelity musicians romping through Esquivel's mid-twentieth-century arrangements of standards including "Sentimental Journey," "Take the A Train," "Frenesi," "Night and Day," and Esquivel's own "Mini Skirt"—all revived through Mr. Ho's painstaking transcriptions over the last 5 years.

After a career in the Los Angeles studios of the 1950s and '60s, the 1970s found Esquivel back in Mexico for personal reasons, leaving many of his belongings—including his musical manuscripts—in a Las Vegas storage container. The container was forgotten, storage bills went unpaid, and the maestro's belongings and scores were destroyed and lost for good. The Orchestrotica is now the only group on the planet to possess a transcribed selection of the best big-band arrangements Esquivel wrote, melding pop, jazz, Latin, and classical music with the original intent to test the limits of a powerful new sound system known as the "stereo" or "hi-fi." Esquivel's original recordings leap out of the speakers, a product of new technology and the roaring, unbridled delight with which the crème-de-la-crème session musicians journey through the charts. *The Unforgettable Sounds of Esquivel* updates mid-century recording techniques and matches them with 21st-century Boston musicians who relish the surreal and challenging arrangements.

Esquivel himself never performed his studio orchestra arrangements live; only Mr. Ho and his Orchestrotica (spending many hours with iTunes' rewind button and a copy of *Finale*) have made it possible to hear these "extreme stereo," Hollywood-intoxicated, pop-meets-jazz band arrangements live. And as of November 16th,

the Space-Age music enthusiast can enjoy these sounds again, updated with the same modern recording techniques Esquivel would have utilized himself in today's recording studio. This CD is the first in the Mr. Ho's "Exotica for Modern Living" series and will be followed in 2011 by *Third River Rangoon* by the group's exotica quartet.

Led by multi-percussionist Mr. Ho (Brian O'Neill), who also doubles on piano, the Orchestrotica's big band formation features four singers and eighteen additional instrumentalists drawn from Boston's finest ensembles. United they form a big band on steroids enhanced by the precision mallet work and hand drumming (Noriko Terada, Jeremy Lang, Mr. Ho), twangy, sliding steel guitar (Tim Obetz), haunting bass flute (Geni Skendo), French horn, Hammond B3 organ (Rusty Scott), and even the noble accordion (Rusty Wutkiewicz). The album opens with Ernesto Lecuona's red-caped bullfighting selection, "Andalucia." The first tune ever assayed by the group, it remains an iconic example of Esquivel's arranging prowess, which melds film score, 1960s Latin, studio orchestra, and jazz with a touch of pop. The percussion-heavy "Frenesi" combines shout-chorus big-band lines, blistering bongos and congas, and a bounty of Esquivel's signature scat syllables "zu-zu-zu" (who needs lyrics?) from the quartet of close-harmony singers. While most of the eleven tracks are intended to sound like the original Esquivel recordings, on "Boulevard of Broken Dreams," the Orchestrotica breaks with Esquivel's tradition and adds a screamin' lead trumpet solo by extraordinary Cuban trumpeter Yaure Muniz. A fan favorite, "Mini Skirt," celebrates Esquivel's famous use of steel guitar and vocalists-as-instrumentalists with its "pa-bas," "pow-pows," Looney Tune steel-guitar glissandi, and "pyoyoyos." On the Brown and Homer classic Sentimental Journey, the subterranean bass trombone of Chris Beaudry lays the foundation and lyrics are replaced with the stellar lip-whistling talents of Paul Pampinella (Berklee College of Music faculty, Five O'Clock Shadow). Later, four-part vocal harmonies reminiscent of the 1940s big-band sound are rudely interrupted by Tim Obetz's slide guitar, modern jazz shout chorus arranging, and the seldom-heard bass marimba!

Billy Strayhorn's Ellington Orchestra classic, "Take the A Train," might well be a tribute to Peter and the Wolf as the vocalists' "sssss" and "chhhhhhs" (in stereo of course) represent the train whistle while the percussion section becomes a modern steam engine powered by cymbal, *quijada*, and brushes, all accompanied by a bass flute melody (naturally right?). Closing out the album is a crime-jazz-meets-Gershwin remix of Alfred Newman's 1931 movie theme, Street Scene, featuring extensive piano work by Mr. Ho and Mark Sanchez's Bugsy Siegel-style trumpet solo (watch out for the hit, man!)

Big-Band CD Release Party:

Jan 14, 2011, 8pm @ YMCA Theatre
Cambridge, MA: full Orchestrotica headlines, w/ Exotica Quartet to open

Additional Exotica Quartet performances:

Nov 3, 2010, 8pm @ Johnny D's Uptown (Somerville, MA)
Dec 2, 2010, 7pm @ Caffe Vivaldi (Manhattan, NYC)
Jan 30, 2011, 8pm @ Club Passim (Cambridge, MA)
Feb 2, 2011, 8pm @ Barbés (Brooklyn, NY)

More "Exotica for Modern Living" album releases (May 2011)

The second album in the series is *Third River Rangoon* (a play on classical-jazz fusion genre "third-stream") and largely features original compositions by the Orchestrotica's vibraphone quartet with special guest Tev Stevig (oud).

Mr. Ho's Orchestrotica is two ensembles: referencing composers as varied as Martin Denny, Arthur Lyman, Milt Raskin, Tchaikovsky, and Shostakovich, the vibraphone quartet is focused on an original collection of updated exotica, jazz, classical chamber, and world music reaching towards the South Pacific via Asia, the Middle East, the Balkans, and Latin America. Bass flute (Geni Skendo), percussion (Noriko Terada), and acoustic bass (Jason Davis) round out the group. The 23-piece big band performs transcriptions of Mexican lounge king Juan Garcia Esquivel. The big band has performed at the Festival de Mexico and the Festival de Nuevos Vientos in Ecatepec, Mexico.

Quick-listen @ <http://orchestrotica.com/album> Official site @ <http://orchestrotica.com>