

## Press Reviews

### CD Reviews: The Rivington Project, "TRIP"

[www.ejazznews.com](http://www.ejazznews.com)

By Edward Blanco

The Rivington Project is essentially a trio of New York-based musicians comprised of guitarist Victor Magnani, drummer George Coleman, Jr. and bassist Martin Rizek. The group produces a sound self described in their promotional material as a "musical gumbo of jazz, rock, funk and experimental music." TRIP is the combo's debut album which features as a special guest veteran sideman, tenor saxophonist Don Braden.

The CD contains seven original tunes by Magnani and one penned by drummer Coleman, Jr. The music is not your typical mainstream jazz but does fall within the contemporary styles that one is familiar with. Having stated that however, there are two tracks that are notable exceptions, "Ikon Tact," and "A-Knuf" produces sounds that clearly are firmly grounded in the funk-jazz groove genre.

For me there were two excellent charts the really define the music here and they are the opener "Navi Gazr," a fast-paced rhythm containing sharp solos by Magnani and Braden alike, and the bookend piece on this set, "Amsterdam After Dark," a terrific and catchy melody with a nice beat. Braden shines on the tenor with "There's No Then In Zen," a piece that seems tailor made for a joust on the reeds. The music does slow down quite a bit on the "New, As of Yet Unnamed Ballad" a fine introspective tune.

In appraising this disc, I found plenty of good music to qualify TRIP as success on many counts. The charts sprinkle the music with a distinctly funky flavor yet manages to remain jazzy in nature. The band provides a first-rate performance marked by excellent guitar work by Magnani and Braden's velvet voicing on tenor. A note-grabbing set of jazz well worth the effort and providing one interesting listen.

Year: 2006

Label: Counterpart Records

Artist Website: [www.rivingtonproject.com](http://www.rivingtonproject.com)

### CD REVIEW: The Rivington Project - "The Rivington Project With Don Braden"

[www.musesmuse.com](http://www.musesmuse.com)

By Gian Fiero - 09/04/06 - 02:04 PM EST

Genre: Jazz

Sounds Like: ?

Technical Grade: 10

Production/Musicianship Grade: 10

Commercial Value: 7

Overall Talent Level: 10

Songwriting Skills: 10

Performance Skill: 10

Best Songs: All

Weakness: None

CD Review: I listened to this project for about 60 seconds before I determined that I was listening to a potential 2006 Muse's Muse Award winner for best Jazz artist. With Victor Magnani on guitar; George Coleman Jr on drums; Marty Rizek on bass; and Don Braden on Tenor sax, the Rivington Project is not only rivetting, it's a true Jazz lover's treat. Turning in what they describe as a musical gumbo of Jazz, Rock, Funk, and experimental music, these New York based musicians consistently display superlative composition skills and a myriad of

influences that mesh together and comprise a solid project that can be enjoyed from start to finish.

Advice: You guys are pros - and you know it. Keep doing what you're doing. Just do more of it.

## **The Rivington Project**

**AllAboutJazz.com**

By John Fidler 10/13/06

A band with an inscrutable name debuts with this session, which is anything but. Guitarist Victor Magnani, bassist Martin Rizek and drummer George Coleman, Jr. are joined by veteran tenor saxman Don Braden for a satisfying, hard-charging hour of music made up of eight numbers--seven by Magnani, one by Coleman's father. Magnani has one previous album to his credit, *Change Management* (Orchard, 2001), featuring songs by John Coltrane, Billy Strayhorn and Charles Mingus, among others.

The album snaps to attention with "Navl Gazr," an uptempo, declarative vehicle that is all but owned by Braden's muscular tenor. Braden sweetens his tone as he weaves his instrument through the fabric of "There's No Then in Zen," a casual walk through the park that showcases Magnani's delicate phrasing on the guitar. The songs reflect the strengths and weaknesses in Magnani's writing: while his tunes are straight, simple and true, they also lack a sense of adventure, of a search for something beyond the chords. For that, we rely on the playing, which rises above Magnani's charcoal sketches and transforms the music into performances that are bracing, dynamic and bright with color.

Magnani was smart to invite Braden, who does much more than sit in. He's an integral part of The Rivington Project. The interplay between the two finds its firmest footing on the funky "A-Nuf" and "Why Aren't You Listening?," a slow, smoky blues with some crisp staccato notes from Magnani. So tightly are the two wound around each other that the sax emerges without a ripple from the sonic surface sheen of the guitar.

Braden has more good moments, but none so eloquent as the ones on "New, As of Yet Unnamed Ballad" where his dark, ardent sighs on the tenor evoke Coleman Hawkins. Magnani's whispers on the guitar flutter like a baby's eyelashes. In George Coleman, Sr.'s "Amsterdam After Dark," the band finds the groove from the opening notes. Rizek's bass steadily anchors the piece while lurking in and around the beat, and Coleman Jr.'s snare and cymbals add a visceral, magnetic urgency.

I wish some of Braden's tunes had been included. Maybe next time. And maybe too the band, already in command of a shapely, concise, energetic sound, will let its hair down a bit and transfer some of the mystery around its name to the music.