

## **WHAT THE PRESS HAS SAID ABOUT PLANETA IMAGINARIO'S *BIOMASA* (CUNEIFORM) 2008**

**“...this Spanish post-fusion band sets the genre clock back to the ‘70s. Funny thing...Planeta Imaginario wins expressive points in a style we might have given up for dead or irrelevant.** The charm is in the details and the quirks. Guitarist Eneko Alberdi Laskurain moves from squirrely, crunchy-toned solos to brooding lyrical chordal parts...keyboardist Marc Capel Nadal...seems to feel most comfortable behind the weathered wheel of a Fender Rhodes... Josep Manresa Zafra’s fretless bass can’t help but trigger...Jaco Pastorious...offbeat horn arrangements lend washes of fresh thinking to the music...

**The album’s closer... “Optical Delusions of a Bipolar Bear;”...shifts from refried, tough guy jazz-rock to Frank Zappa-esque to Robert Frippish moments, but it ends up with a folkloric field recording of a brass band parading from ear to ear in the stereo mix. It reminds us of what was lacking in much fusion of old: a sense of humor on the cultural playground. Could it be that fusion is ripe for a renaissance? Maybe musical models such as this one—from unexpected corners, globally and stylistically—will hasten a reconsideration of fusion’s early demise.”**

– Josef Woodward, *Jazziz*, July/August 2008 “... Although they started as a progressive rock act, their second album...is closer to mainstream contemporary jazz than the likes of avowed influences such as King Crimson or Hatfield & the North. ...horn and reeds...are in the forefront throughout, with guitarist Eneko Alberdi Laskurain favoring a tone more in keeping with George Benson than Robert Fripp... given Capel’s fondness for electric piano, clavinet, and old-fashioned synthesizers, there’s an unapologetic ‘70s feel to much of *l*, a mellowness that’s tempered by the unexpected left turns into a tougher, noisier brand of jazz-rock... **Listeners coming from any point on the Venn diagram that connects jazz producer-arranger Creed Taylor’s ‘70s releases on the crossover-oriented CTI Records, the Soft Machine, and Frank Zappa’s later instrumental works will likely find something appealing here. [3.5 stars]**”

– Stewart Mason, *All Music Guide*, allmusic.com

**“...*Biomasa* is a fusion feast in the broadest possible terms. Combining elements of Spanish fusion a la Chick Corea with African grooves, Canterbury whimsy (Gilgamesh, In Cahoots), knotty Zappa-esque arrangements, slight tastes of classical impressionism, Allman Brothers-style guitar jams and even a hint of Gong and Magma- like psychedelic absurdity... A seriously fine group of players, this Spanish nonet’s strong writing and broader concept tie *Biomasa*’s ten tracks into an hour-long suite reminiscent of similarly linked material by Hatfield and the North and National Health. ... Laskurain’s three compositions take up half the album’s running time, but Capel’s writing demonstrates the greatest diversity, challenge and emotional shifts. “El francotirador de Washington” also begins in Phil Miller territory, but dissolves into a rubato tone poem filled with lush horns, electric piano and gentle guitar. ...**

**With its seemingly effortless shifts of time and feel, *Biomasa* is a progressive album of rare complexity, where the detailed writing and organic stylistic permutations and combinations not only feel completely natural, but inevitable. ...plenty for the head and heart...”**

– John Kelman, *All About Jazz*, www.allaboutjazz.com, May 30, 2008

**“...this zestful Catalan electric eight-piece combines influences drawn from Canterbury prog, post-Metheny and Corea more Spanish-inflected fusion. [3 stars]”**

– “Shortcuts”, *Jazzwise*, September 2008

**“...classic jazz-rock-fusion that is complex and yet melodically smooth. ... Prog rock fans will be interested to hear a distinct Canterbury influence running through the band’s music. But from the moment you put this disc on, there’s no question about the primary direction...this is first and foremost a jazz-rock record. Searing performances on guitar, horns and sax... anyone who has an interest in fusion music will enjoy the music created here.”**

– Jerry Lucky, *The Progressive Rock Files*, www.jerrylucky.com, June 1, 2008

**“Jazz-Rock fusion...that’s not only deftly executed but also leavened with a lightness of touch and heart which keeps it from being the usual turgid stuff. ...the structures of the music are unrestrictive enough to allow breathing space. ...**

... “Hoy es un nuevo dia” has Hatfield And The North’s way with an odd time signature...

...Trinh’s trombone calls to mind Nick Evans with the Keith Tippett Group, coincidentally from round about the time when fusion was first being forwarded as a viable mode... On the other hand Hermann “Mehl” Baurecker and Rafa Gomez Lopez on alto and tenor sax respectively sound overtly like no-one but themselves in their sadly brief duo...”

– Nic Jones, *All About Jazz*, www.allaboutjazz.com, March 9, 2009

**“...greater exposure should be in order with the advent of this USA issued studio effort. ...this is a very polished outfit. ... They bridge the gap...between hardcore jazz-rock/fusion and wistful, Canterbury shaded progressive-rock. ...the ensemble merges melodically drenched hooks with warm horns choruses, analog synth treatments, and edgy soloing escapades.**

...the octet also merges African rhythms with blithe harmonic overtures while punching out feisty rock grooves. ...the musicians rather seamlessly fuse bustling movements and knotty time signatures with breezy horns arrangements...

... the program benefits from a fine production... **This is modern day jazz-rock at its pinnacle of excellence!”**

– Glenn Astarita, *JazzReview.com*

“...the 70’s... With the successful Canet Rock...festival, and the not less influential “Onda Laietana” (“Laietan Wave”) generated around the historic Zeleste club ... the Catalan scene gave birth to a memorable host of solo artists and bands, including Pau Riba, Jaume Sisa, Companyia Elèctrica Dharma, Iceberg, Màquina!, Barcelona Traction, Pegasus, Gòtic, Atila...

**Planeta Imaginario, a band that already has a healthy reputation in the local scene, embraces this great heritage, and along the likes of contemporary Spanish/Catalan bands like Unoma, Soma Planet (...the perfect match on a double bill...), Urban Trapeze, Hysteriofunk, The Knife, Alquibencil, Dr. No or Dificil Equilibrio, to name but a few, gives it a new lease of life for the new millennium.** Besides the Mediterranean factor, there’s also obvious nods to **Frank Zappa... Soft Machine, Nucleus** and even some **Chick Corea**, which make the band’s music even more colourful and dynamic, but their most charming trait...is their “local” sensibility.

...the words Planeta Imaginario...for [thirty-something] Catalans...strikes an emotional chord... this 80’s children’s TV show...was... a hugely imaginative display of talent, mixing references to artists like Miró and Dalí, with fairytales, surrealism, puppets, shadow plays, theatre performances, clowns, fireworks...

**...*Biomasa* provides a similar experience, in the shape of a superb aural rollercoaster.** The psychedelic *Discurso Cósmico Desde El Planeta Imaginario*...serves as a short intriguing overture to *El Francotirador De Washington*...a full blown jazz extravaganza, displaying...a strong horn section... bandleader Marc Capell...contributes the shorter, more structured and melodic pieces. ...

... guitarist Eneko Laskurain provides the longer and more adventurous pieces. These...give more breathing space to inventive guitar, intricate percussion patterns, sonic textures, as well as a wider, different palette of influences. ...

**All in all, an almost flawless album full of inventiveness and great musicianship ... 8 out of 10”**

– Hector Gomez, *Dutch Progressive Rock Page*, www.dprp.net, Volume 4, 2009

“An eight-piece(!) fusion band from Spain is as unlikely an entity as you might encounter in today’s rather disposable music climate...but **Planeta Imaginario, like their rather enigmatic sobriquet, seethe with more than just nimble chops.** They have that in spades as well ...whatever influences the adept listener might detect (echoes of Weather Report, National Health...rogue Fender Rhodes-centric bands of the 70s) is handily washed away in the octet’s elaborate arrangements.

... the sparkling bop-cum-fusion flourishes of "Washington Sniper." ...recalling... Tony Williams' later (and lighter) Lifetime works. ...record's title track kicks in: throughout its leisurely pace, there crawls a tasty walking bass line amidst nicely Metheny-esque guitars, trickling Rhodes runs, and piquant fills of trombone as the whole piece becomes a lilting jazz calliope. ...

**Lest the band not allow us to forget their origins...the closing track, "Optical Delusions of a Bipolar Bear," works pealing, metallic guitars, Fripp-like ostinato patterns, percussive grunge and sax skronk ...old-school prog electronic whitewash - to re-imagine a Spanish King Crimson jamming enthusiastically with Chick Corea and his Return to Forever mates. Bravo."**  
– Darren Bergstein, *The Squid's Ear*, March 24, 2008

**"Planeta Imaginario is a Spanish fusion band whose music includes Canterbury elements, ranging from Hatfield and the North to Gilgamesh, perhaps even Soft Machine, as well as aspects of Chick Corea...not to mention their Spanish brethren, such as Iceberg, Musica Urbana and the like. One even hears strains of Dutch progressive fusion group Solution in the coupling of saxophone and organ... The cascading piano runs in "Hoy es un Nueva Dia" are rather more akin to those of Rick Wakeman than Corea or Solution's Willem Ennes, though it quickly returns to more conventional jazz territory. There even is a nod toward Zeuhl... Overall a sweeter, even more mainstream affair than typical Cuneiform fare, yet typically solid and musical."**  
– Dean Suzuki, *Progression*, Issue 55, Fall/Winter 2008

**"This 2008 release...is a great throwback to the late 60's/early 70's jazz scene, the days when bands like Soft Machine, Return Forever, The Brecker Brothers, Mahavishnu Orchestra, Frank Zappa, Miles Davis, National Health, Tony Williams Lifetime, Weather Report, Brand X, and The Eleventh House ruled the planet with their thrilling mix of jazz, rock, funk, prog, and r&b. ...the production gives the songs a great live, almost vintage sound throughout the CD. Check out the tasty Fender Rhodes electric piano from Marc Capel Nadal comping away while guitarist Eneko Alberdi Laskurian rips into a spectacular solo on the brilliant piece "Capture"-classic fusion! There's plenty of horns...which gives things an early Chicago & *Grand Wazoo* era Zappa feel... The two epics...are great groove laden jazz pieces... the 9-minute closer "Trastornos Ópticos del Oso Bipolar" is a quirky number with plenty of tricky ensemble trade-offs...solos, and powerful arrangements, easily the highlight of the CD and a must hear for both fusion and prog fans alike. Hard not to love something like this, especially if you appreciate classic jazz-fusion. Once again, kudos to the folks at Cuneiform for bringing this band to our attention. ... [4 stars]"**  
– Pete Pardo, *Sea of Tranquility*, www.seaoftranquility.org, August 2, 2008

**"Spanish prog rock conquistadors Planeta Imaginario tread lightly upon prog rock waters, touching down in fields of acoustic jazz improvisation as easily as drilling raucous 32nd notes into your skull. Biomasa is...time-travel inducing, recalling the big brass belches of *Chicago II*, the saucy Rhodes piano work of Chick Corea, and the playfulness of Frank Zappa's *Hot Rats*."**  
– Ken Micallef, "Better Living Through MP3", *Yahoo! Music*, new.music.new.com, May 30, 2008

**"Planeta Imaginario...frequently sounds like a little orchestra, particularly and frequently so on...*Washington Sniper* and *Capture*... the music falls squarely into the vintage jazz-rock idiom, referring directly to the American wing of the genre. The movements with a strong 'brass' presence are prevalent here and are slightly reminiscent of Weather Report, while the arrangements that are dominated by rock instruments...bring to mind Return To Forever. ...two tracks contain lyrical content... *Black Box*, *Today is a New Day* and *The Summer*...find the ensemble performing Jazz-Fusion with certain quasi-symphonic tendencies...with Soft Machine, Brand X, National Health and Manfred Mann's Earth Band...reference points. Each of the aforementioned five tracks is an excellent composition, filled with everything that true, open-minded, progressive souls love their music for, but nevertheless the semi-epic concluding piece, *Optical Delusions of a Bipolar Bear*, is even better and is just brilliant, coming across as the brightest gem in the crown of this remarkable album. Its overall style embraces both Rock- and Metal-In-Opposition, Avant-Jazz, Zeuhl and...some quantities of typically jazzy as well as quasi-symphonic features. ...Planeta Imaginario's sound...is in fact very much their own. Two of the tracks, *Farandulero's Theatre* and *Biomass*, are standouts... Ranging from almost purely symphonic arrangements to eclectic improvisational jams, the first of these is an amazing little concerto for acoustic instruments... the title track brings together jazzy, bluesy and African ethnic motifs... a groovy piece with a certain hypnotic quality...**  
... Overall, this is a highly intriguing recording from a group of musicians whose improvisational skill and creative potential in general are instantly striking and are beyond praise. Jazz rock-oriented progressive music lovers will definitely find this "Biomass" to be very much to their taste... I gladly invite it to take one of the higher positions in my list of last year's top 20 releases. [6 stars]"

– Vitaly Menshikov, *Progressor*, www.progressor.net, February 7, 2009

**"...In this work they show their influence by, and admiration for, our legendary "Soft Machine". The cd consists of 8 instrumental themes, with wide and diverse sound elements: keyboards, guitar, trumpet, flugelhorn, fretless bass, drums, tenor saxophone, trombone, and alto saxophone. ... The themes are often very "canterbury" and complex...well put together...solid compositions and the adept solos...the guitar has a pleasant sound...the great agility of the keyboard player is heard when playing fender rhodes... the group is displaying a good impulse and high intensity in their music. [3/5 stars]"**  
– Steven Västman, *Prog Archives*, www.progarchives.com, July 21, 2009

**"Festive 40 / Best of 2008... #35 Planeta Imaginario : Biomasa (Cuneiform) (The music lives up to the name!) ..."** – *Paradox One*

**"We are given two heavily processed voice transmissions, messages from "the Imaginary Planet" in outer space, and the now-spaced-out listener recalls Dr. Timothy Leary intoning. ..."Washington Sniper" sounds like a cool 1960s combo, or a 1970s "blaxploitation" TV thriller or cop show sporting a hot soundtrack. The gentle and friendly "Capture" features a guitar wah-wah pedal out of Jimi Hendrix, while the African beat of "Biomass" bubbles in the Nigerian High Life style of King Sunny Adé. Sax player Alfonso Muñoz studied in Havana's Instituto Superior de Artes, and we can hear it. "Black Box" bristles with 1970s Funk-infused, rippling Fender Rhodes electric piano of Marc Capel. ... The final track's title translates into "Optical Delusions of a Bipolar Bear". It's a virtuosic communication between guitar and tumbling cascades of piano. Horns work their magic, organ and Big Rock drums build up to a big finish...Planeta Imaginario delivers more."**

– Michael R. Mosher, *Leonardo On-line*, www.leonardo.info, September 2008