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Bio Information: **PLANETA IMAGINARIO**

Title: **OPTICAL DELUSIONS** (Cuneiform Rune 318)

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**FILE UNDER: JAZZ-ROCK / FUSION / PROGRESSIVE 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.”*

– Stewart Mason, *All Music Guide*

*“The funny circus-like coda, instead of relieving the tension, adds more madness in a Dadaist manner. The guys of Planeta Imaginario master the art of honoring their favorite influences and instilling a series of refreshing moods into the resulting sound.”*

– Caesar Inca, *Prog Archives*

*“With its seemingly effortless shifts of time and feel, Biomasa [their previous Cuneiform disc] is a progressive album of rare complexity, where the detailed writing and organic stylistic permutations and combinations not only feel completely natural, but inevitable.”*

– John Kelman, *All About Jazz*

**Planeta Imaginario’s** latest *Optical Delusions* has more variety, musical acumen, and vision than most 10 albums put together—but all that means little without focus, taste, and wit. There are chops and sumptuous arrangements worthy of the bands of **Frank Zappa** and **Gil Evans**, the warm, vivid Impressionism of **Ravel** and **Debussy**, the jagged wit of **Stravinsky**, the wry, understated flair and humor (or “humour”) of the **Canterbury** posse, and perhaps most important of all, the lean impertinence of a rock band that has the urge to say something to the Collective Us, then having said it, moves on to something else. (In other words, it exhibits a refreshing conciseness and an absence of excess.) In short, *Optical Delusions* is a disc that will appeal to **Rock In Opposition (RIO)** aficionados, unflappable post-rock types, old- (& new) school prog-rock fans, open-minded jazz-heads, fusionistas that wonder where the edge and wonder went, and even classical-crossover fans.

Founded in 1999 by multi-keyboards whiz kid **Marc Capel** (began playing at age four), Planeta Imaginario are an all-instrumental combo exploring and cultivating the delirious gray, surreal areas where all the above overlap: The surreal, fluid imagination of the city’s artistic heritage; the Canterbury scene of ‘70s Britain (i.e., the whimsical, jazz-influenced, more-songs-than-solos-oriented bands such as **Caravan**, **Hatfield and the North**, and **National Health**), and the dazzling, energetic jazz-rock fusion scene of the early ‘70s (i.e., Chick Corea, **Pat Metheny**, **Tony Williams’ Lifetime** w/ Alan Holdsworth, **Zappa** circa *Grand Wazoo/Waka Jawaka*). Vividly colorful horn ensemble playing and jazz-charged keyboards soar, thrust, and parry over steadily propulsive yet volatile rhythms. There are plenty of complex, classically-inspired harmonies (inspired by proto-prog giant **Satie** and the Impressionists) but unlike some prog- and math-rock-minded bands, there’s a bright melodic sense at work consistently—the proceedings never become dry, stiff, or ponderous. The music of **Planeta Imaginario** is brainy but never abstract, witty but never quirky merely for its own sake, accessible but never formulaic.

With a slightly different personnel, Planeta Imaginario released their debut *Que Me Dices?* on the Spanish **Margen** label (an offshoot of the famed magazine for progressive/experimental music) in 2004. They toured Spain and Austria, playing both jazz and rock venues. In ’07 they signed with **Cuneiform Records**, and released their first offering for the label *Biomasa*, in ’08. In the words of RIO icon **Chris Cutler** (**Henry Cow**, **Art Bears**) it was: “An impressive record.”

Their latest disc, *Optical Delusions*, finds them pursuing a somewhat more jazz-oriented direction. There are bubbling, shimmering textures evoking the early electric works of jazz fusion pioneer **Joe Zawinul**, especially his work on **Miles Davis’ In A Silent Way**. But don’t think Planeta Imaginario is foregoing its prog-rock and classical roots. “The Garden of Happy Cows” [“El jardi de les vaques alegres”] begins with a regal, Renaissance choral-like melody by the horns, then effortlessly morphs into a bubbling, breezy **Corea**-like electric piano alternating with some soulful Hammond organ, followed by thorny, twisty, bracing horn arrangements echoing early ‘70s Zappa. Some tersely wailing sax is subsumed by crackling percussion, sultry, contemplative bebop sax soloing, searing, **Caravan**-flavored keys-soloing, and zigzagging horns before concluding with some trancelike bliss recalling **Gong** in its psychedelic **Daavid Allen** heyday. And *that’s* only track two.

Throughout, everyone gets to shine while never forgetting the Planeta Imaginario approach that each composition (or suite) is its *own body of work* is paramount. **Natsuko Sugao’s** plaintive, lyrical trumpet; **Alphoso Muñoz’s** multiple soaring saxophones, **Dmitris Bikos’** sinewy fretless bass, **The-Hien Trinh’s** hearty trombone, and the busy-but-never-too-busy drums of **Vasco Trilla dos Santos**. Along with **Capel**, they bring many decades of varied experiences and disciplines to home-Planeta Imaginario, a sound-world as intriguing as it is inviting, as provocative as it is comforting.

Mention Barcelona and the geographically hip and history buffs will know it’s Spain second largest city, a Mediterranean port city that’s one of the chief commercial and cultural hubs of Western Europe. This city has a legendary and well-deserved reputation for being a major “crossroads” kind of place, geographically and artistically. Barcelona’s fertile grounds have long nurtured creativity and radical artistic innovation. Four of Western Civilization’s most innovative 20th century visual artists called Barcelona their stomping grounds: architect **Antoni Gaudi**, and artists **Pablo Picasso**, **Juan (Joan) Miro**, and **Salvatore Dali**, who made surrealism so “real” for the world. There was even an award-winning ‘80s children’s television program that celebrated and incorporated elements pioneered by such artists with contemporary music: **Planeta Imaginario**. And now, there is a musical ensemble where assorted strands, strains, and influences crisscross and commingle – Planeta Imaginario, not just another band from Barcelona.

**PROMOTIONAL PHOTOS**



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