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Francesco Amenta: Midtown Walk

BY PIERRE GIROUX
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New York City continues to be a destination for individuals who wish to build a career for themselves in what is probably the toughest jazz market in the world. Tenor saxophonist [Francesco Amenta](#) who was born and raised in Modena Italy, came to NYC in 2017 and is now fighting for time and space to build his reputation. His current project *Midtown Walk* is his second release as a leader, but his debut USA recording.

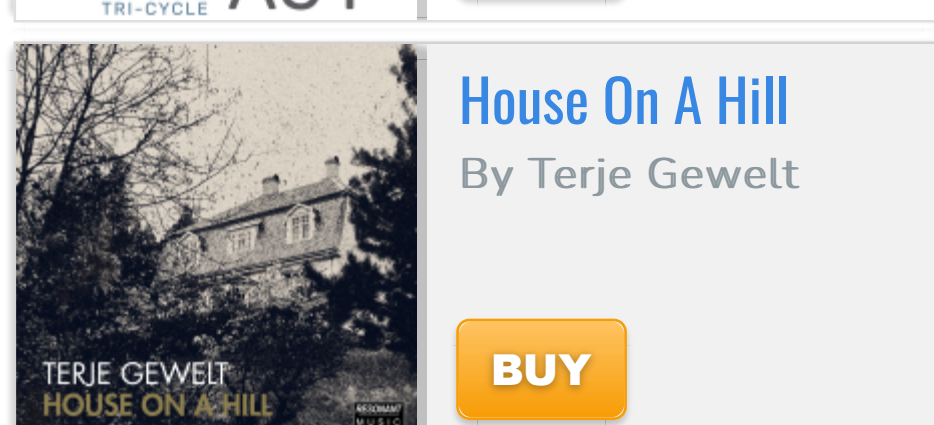
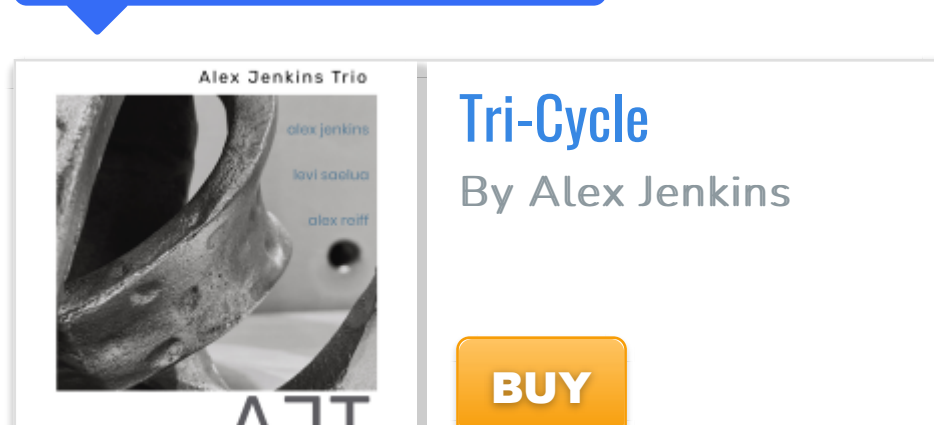


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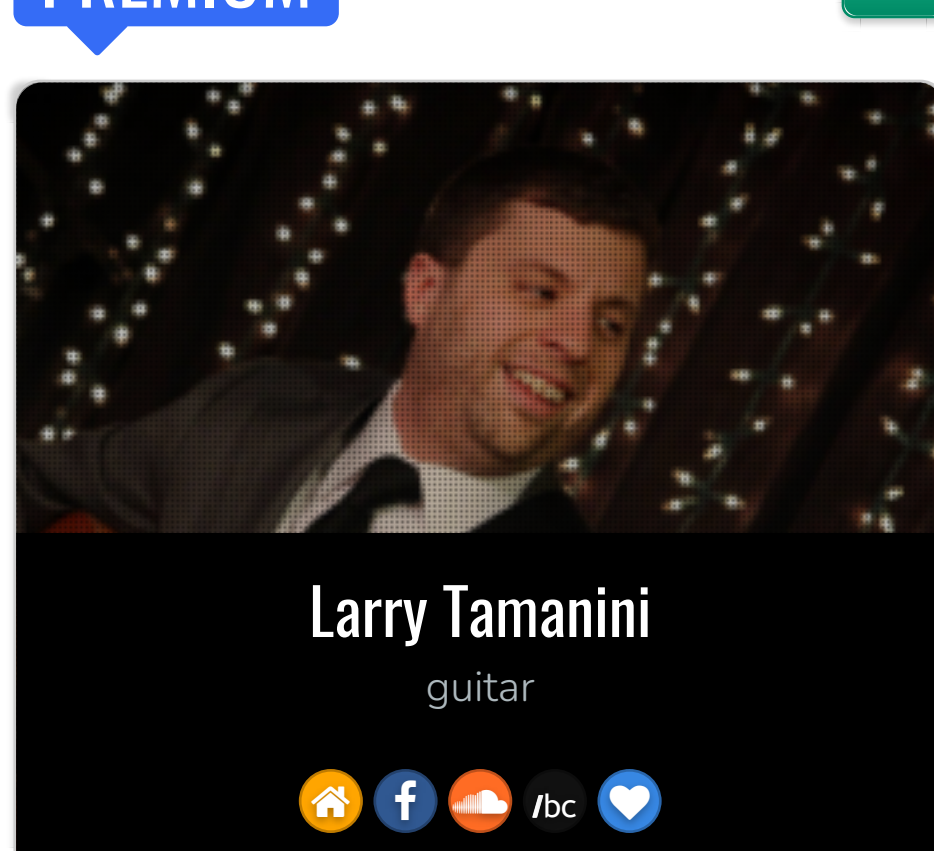


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By Terje Gewelt

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The set list for this self-produced album is almost entirely original material, drawn from Amenta's way of living in the US, with the exception of [Duke Ellington's](#) "Come Sunday." The supporting band is anchored by the greatly esteemed pianist [Cyrus Chestnut](#), along with bassist [Kimon Karoutzos](#) and female drummer [Gary Kerezou](#).

The opening track is "Dancing," which Amenta wrote for his wife, a dancer. However there is no dancing in the number, just some tightly-scripted playing by the band which balances mood and structure. "Home" opens with a blues line from pianist Chestnut which gets picked up in a seamless transition by Amenta, as the theme is intended to capture street life in NYC. Amenta delivers some slippery lines showing impressive flexibility. Bassist Karoutzos shows his strong uncluttered style in a lengthy solo which begins " Bunch Of Time." Having established a funky groove, Amenta then digs in with some resourceful playing, until Chestnut takes over with his effortlessly charismatic style.

Amenta continues to tell his story over the next few tracks. Probably the most interesting is " Burgundy" which blends many America musical styles to engaging effect. The number takes off with a New Orleans second line kick and then on to a blues line which Amenta grasps with boisterous intensity. Chestnut's solo is compelling and shows that he has an attentive understanding of jazz traditions.

The session closes with "Come Sunday" which comes in at close to twelve minutes running time. One might have thought, given the length, that the band could have run out of ideas and there would have been unnecessary duplication. Not so. Beautifully structured, it is covered in a reverential fashion and all the players raise their game by demonstrating that they are resourceful and have an intense dedication to creativity.

★★★★☆

Track Listing

Dancing; Home; Bunch Of Time; Number 9; 06/22; Travellers; Burgundy; Come Sunday.

Personnel

[Francesco Amenta](#): saxophone, tenor; [Cyrus Chestnut](#): piano; [Kimon Karfoutzos](#): bass; [Gary Kerezou](#): drums.

Album Information

Title: *Midtown Walk* | Year Released: 2021 | Record Label: Amenta Music International

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