



ERIC LEGNINI

THE VOX

RELEASE DATE - T E S E 2 0 1 1

Pianist, producer and arranger Eric Legnini explores Afro-beat, jazz, soul and more in his latest album, The Vox, featuring sublime vocalist Krystle Warren.

Born in Belgium in 1970 to Italian parents, soulful pianist **Eric Legnini**, first made his mark in the mid-1990s as the young, discreet but highly-talented pianist in the Stefano Di Battista quartet. His piano was a perfect foil for the fiery and voluble alto saxophonist. His rich phrasing, refined and sensual, always marrying itself effortlessly to the melody and the vocal, made him one of the stars of the Parisian jazz scene and a key member of recent projects by uber-producers the Belmondo Brothers. Initially drawn to Classical music, Legnini fell under the spell of jazz in the early '80s, when he heard an Erroll Garner album. Legnini totally immersed himself in the history of discovering the gréât pianists McCoy Tyner, Chick Corea Keith Jarrett and of course Herbie Hancock. In the late '80s he spent two years in New York, working with the likes of Vincent Herring, Branford Marsalis and Kenny Garrett and falling under the spell of that cities free-wheeling, funky, hard-bop and developing an interest in Hip Hop and funk. Returning to Europe in the early '90s he became a key member of Stefano Di Battista's group, before striking out on his own, with a series of fine albums drawing on funk, swing and hard-bop including his récent tribute to 'The Meters', Trippin',

On **The Vox**, Legnini has written ten of the eleven themes in a repertoire that is *"quite upbeat, but with a few touches of melancholy"*. Up-tempo instrumentals and gentle songs, an explicit tribute to the Black President of afro-beat and a philosophical ballad inspired by the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins, a reworking of one of his old tracks "Nightfall" disguised in the bluesy words of **Krystle Warren** and a nod to British afro-jazz swing, pop harmonies and even '90s Harlem, hammering the ivories or lightly plucking solos on the heartstrings.

The Vox features Legnini's peerless rhythm section: **Frank Agulhon** on drums and **Thomas Bramerie** on double bass, supported by two guitarists, Belgian **Daniel Roméo** – funk bassist and Legnini's childhood friend – and from the Congo **Kiala Nzavotunga**, fellow-devotee of the late Fela and founder of the band Ghetto Blaster, plus an old-style brass section. Together they explore old-fashioned *Breckers Brothers* style jazz-funk, as well as the culture of funk, hip-hop, samples, loops, *"a kind of trance in between the lines"* *"I wanted it to stay jazz in the harmonies but afro-beat in its function"* and gentler, soulful tunes drawing on folk and even pop melodies. Paris and London-based American singer **Krystle Warren** is immense here, featuring on six of the songs, her unique, deeply-soulful voice bringing an air of complex ambiguity to Legnini's themes and his music: warm, direct, and replete with swing and gospel, and, without faux nostalgia, celebrates the timeless modernity of jazz.

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