

Maurizio
Minardi

Piano Ambulance (2015) reviews:

"A very enjoyable performance with Minardi playing both his chosen instruments with a high degree of skill and providing perceptive and illuminating observations about the inspirations behind the tunes "

(The Jazz Mann)



The Jazz Mann

"...the music is constantly in a state of flux, changing in ways that both absorb and delight the listener"



All About Jazz

"the album is a house guest that any music lover would be glad to welcome into their life ... warmly recommended."



Jazz Views

"His music has grace, tenderness and simplicity as well as moments of madness, and he has the ability to move an audience deeply "



UK Vibe

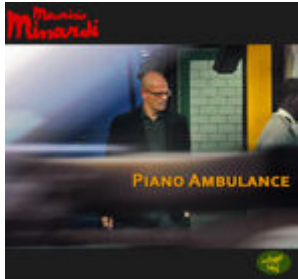
"...every track is a gem, each telling its own unique little story..."

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Adrian Pallant

"Minardi's penchant for visual music... is so evidently cinematic in its predominance of drama, urgency and storytelling, whilst also contrasted by delightfully delicate interludes."



"...an outstanding album"

(The Musician)

"...this is one journey by ambulance you are unlikely to regret..."
(Bebop Spoken Here)

"Minardi writes music which has as clear a lineage in classical and perhaps film music as it does in jazz, bringing finely tuned drama to the proceeding"
(The Jazz breakfast)

"...an absolutely sparkling album..."

(Jazz Camera)

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Reviews – **The Cook, the Clown, the Monk and the Accordionist (2013)**

["A standout recording, full of atmospheric music that combines immediately engaging hooks with sweeping narrative and emotional depth ... A pleasure from first note to last." \(All About Jazz\)](#)

CD/LP/Track Review

Maurizio Minardi: The Cook, The Clown, The Monk And The Accordionist (2013)

By **BRUCE LINDSAY**, Published: March 31, 2013

It's not the snappiest album title ever, but *The Cook, The Clown, The Monk And The Accordionist*, by the UK-based Italian musician Maurizio Minardi, is one snappy album. This is a standout recording, full of atmospheric music that combines immediately engaging hooks with sweeping narrative and emotional depth.

Minardi's *My Piano Trio* (Belfagor Label, 2012) mixed jazz and European classical influences with great success. Minardi used two different trio lineups, one of which included bassist Nick Pini and drummer Jason Reeve who both feature on *The Cook, The Clown, The Monk And The Accordionist*. On this album Minardi favors the accordion—the piano is present but rarely makes any real impression—combining the instrument on the front line with Shirley Smart's cello.

Minardi draws on influences as diverse as latin, jazz, contemporary classical and folk musics. His love of short, repetitive, phrases to set moods and create tension is reminiscent of Michael Nyman's work: the resulting tunes range from the humorous to the mysterious to the romantic.

"Penguin" waddles along joyously, no sense of chilly southern climes to spoil the feelgood factor. The titular bird seems to be strolling on the boulevards of fin-de-siecle Paris, popping into the occasional bar to share an absinthe with Toulouse Lautrec or Edgar Degas. Either that, or it's a celebration of one of the UK's favorite chocolate biscuits. Smart's cello is the highlight of "Five Is Better Than Four," a lovely, sensual, tune: "Marcello" resembles Astor Piazzolla's "Libertango" in its seductive rhythm, but the combination of accordion and cello gives it a melancholy edge.

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The strong narrative of the "Monk Trio"—if it can be referred to in that way—tells an enigmatic tale. "The Monk's Escape" is split between furtive, nervous, movement and high drama as the escapee breaks out of his (unidentified) prison. "The Monk Abandoned" projects a genuine loneliness with Minardi and Smart both contributing strongly to this melancholy sensation. Finally "The Monk Is Back," in a suitably triumphant mood, [Marco Quarantotto's](#) drums and Minardi's stabbing accordion phrases communicating the monk's relief. Then there's "The Cook In Love," a persistently jolly tune that defies any attempt to remain uncheered thanks to Minardi's upbeat accordion and Reeve's shuffle beat.

The Cook, The Clown, The Monk And The Accordionist (the title is a play on Peter Greenaway's 1989 movie *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife And Her Lover*, for which Nyman composed the score) is an album that impresses with its imaginative scope and ambition. Even better, it impresses with the quality of its tunes, its musicianship and the joyousness of its performances. A pleasure from first note to last.

Track Listing: The Cook In Love; Penguin; The Monk's Escape; The Monk Abandoned; The Monk Is Back; Five Is Better Than Four; The Black Book; Marcello; The Taming Of The Shrew; The Gambling Queen; Dirty Clown.

Personnel: Maurizio Minardi: accordion, piano; Shirley Smart: cello; Nick Pini: double bass; Jason Reeve: drums (1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 10); Marco Quarantotto: drums (3, 5, 9, 11).

Record Label: **Belfagor Label**

Maurizio Minardi



Reviews – My Piano Trio (2012)

["Lyrical, intelligent, contemporary piano jazz with its roots in the European classical tradition and beyond..." \(The Jazz Mann, July 2012\)](#)

REVIEW



My Piano Trio
Maurizio Minardi
Tuesday, July 10, 2012
Reviewed by: Ian Mann

ALBUM

★★★★☆

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“ *Lyrical, intelligent, contemporary piano jazz with its roots in the European classical tradition and beyond.* ”

Maurizio Minardi
"My Piano Trio"
(Belfagor Label MM10)

The Italian pianist and composer Maurizio Minardi has lived in London since 2008 and has subsequently worked with a variety of jazz musicians including Quentin Collins, Brandon Allen, Yuri Goloubev, Asaf Sirkis, Maciek Pysz and Antonio Forcione as well as with Portugese singer Carmen Souza and even with the Royal Shakespeare Company. He has also written songs for Italian pop singers such as Gianni Morandi and had had his work remixed by DJ Paul Murphy.

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Minardi has been the driving force behind the jazz tango group Quartetto Magritte (where he also plays accordion) and the fusion group Oz but he has always also played in the piano trio format and this latest release showcases both the British and Italian versions of his groups. Three of the album's selections were recorded in London in 2011 in the company of double bassist Nick Pini and drummer Jason Reeve. The remaining pieces were recorded in Bologna in 2010 with bassist Felice Del Gaudio and drummer Roberto Rossi. It was also in Bologna that Minardi completed his studies in piano, organ and composition at the city's Dams University.

Minardi's classical training is clearly audible in the music of the trio as is his fascination with tango. His music covers a variety of styles and is highly descriptive and sometimes densely rhythmic but always with a strong classical influence. He cites E.S.T. as a key inspiration (the Swedish trio led by the late pianist Esbjorn Svensson have been profoundly influential on virtually all contemporary piano trios) alongside the music of film composers Ennio Morricone, Nino Rota, Yann Tiersen and Michael Nyman.

The album begins with two pieces from the London based trio. "Shiny" begins with the sound of Minardi's unaccompanied arpeggios before Reeve and Pini establish a hip hop style groove that evokes the inevitable comparisons with E.S.T. The piece is punctuated by a lyrical central episode featuring the rich sounds of Pini's bass and Minardi's light, classically inspired piano touch. The broken beat groove then returns for the brief closing section.

Featuring the same trio the lengthier, more atmospheric "Poppies" reveals Minardi's gift for melody and features another excellent performance from Pini who again solos extensively. Reeve's sympathetic, neatly detailed drumming also serves the trio well.

The first item from the all Italian line up is "Einaudito", like "Poppies" taken at a slow to medium tempo but more obviously song like in its construction. Once again Minardi gives a degree of prominence to his bassist, in this instance Felice Del Gaudio. Roberto Rossi's are economic but functional and effective.

"Perludio" is the final item from the "English" trio and combines classically derived structures with a jazz feel on a piece that progresses through varying sections with Pini again featuring prominently as he solos above Minardi's insistent piano chording. Reeve's drumming is colourful and neatly energetic, sympathetic and once again exhibiting a fine eye for detail.

Recorded in Bologna but presumably inspired by London "Clapham Park" features lengthy passages of flowingly lyrical solo piano with Del Gaudio providing occasional accompaniment on double bass, his tone huge and resonant.

The reflective mood is continued on "Canicola" with Del Gaudio again making a significant contribution with his deep, lyrical sound. Rossi's brushwork is feather light and finely nuanced.

The rippling arpeggios of "Magritte" (the title a nod in the direction of Minardi's jazz/tango ensemble) provide the backdrop for yet more excellent work from the dexterous Del Gaudio. Minardi is fond of interlocking rhythmic patterns with this piece representing a particularly good example as the music unfolds and develops.

"Tulipano Nero" expands on this in more animated fashion with taut, repetitive, classically inspired piano patterns meshing with economical grooves to produce music with a compelling insistence. A more impressionistic central passage allows drummer Rossi the freedom to roam using a variety of sticks and mallets before the trio give a brief restatement of the main theme.

The closing "Breton" is a starkly beautiful ballad with Minardi's piano lyricism enhanced by Del Gaudio's richly resonant bass and Rossi's mallet rumbles and well judged cymbal work.

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There's something of a bonus in the form of a remixed version of "Magritte", recorded in Bologna and featuring looped arco bass, a more contemporary drum groove and a modest degree of other electronica. The overall effect is to enhance the layering process already alluded to in some of the earlier piano trio pieces.

"My Piano Trio" is a neatly crafted album full of intriguing compositional ideas and some excellent playing from both sets of musicians. Minardi has a light, classically honed touch at the piano but there's little conventional jazz soloing. Instead Minardi adopts a role as the fulcrum of the trio, subtly dictating the course of the music. However he nonetheless encourages a strong sense of democracy within both groups with bassists Pini and Del Gaudio both allowed a generous amount of solo space which they exploit superbly. Both drummers display a commendable sensitivity and exhibit a fine eye for detail in their intelligent, quietly colourful contributions. If the album has a fault it's a tendency towards "one pace-dom" and there's sometimes a feeling that the music is over disciplined with nobody really getting the chance to cut loose. Nevertheless the album has much to commend it, lyrical, intelligent contemporary piano jazz with its roots in the European classical tradition and beyond.

Minardi will be appearing at Oliver's Jazz Bar in Greenwich, London on the evening of July 21st 2012 with a trio featuring Pini and drummer Pharoah Russell. It will be interesting to see how he develops this music in a live context. Full details of the event plus further information relating to Minardi's musical activities can be found at <http://www.minardimaurizio.com>

"The overall feeling is tranquil and meditative - interesting, crafted writing, fine playing and above all a strong emotional appeal." (LondonJazz, July 2012)

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CD Review: Maurizio Minardi - *My Piano Trio*

Maurizio Minardi - *My Piano Trio*

(Belafagor Label MM10. CD Review by Alison Bentley)

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'My Piano Trio': minimalist title, exquisite minimalist music. Italian pianist/composer **Maurizio Minardi's** new CD actually has two trios: from London (where he now lives) and Bologna, featuring his classically-influenced compositions. He admires film composers such as Michael Nyman and Yann Tiersen. Minardi's own pieces draw you in to their serene world, and Tord Gustavson's sense of space comes to mind.

Some tunes have a limpid simplicity, such as *Shiny*, with harmonic progressions and arpeggios redolent of Bach -he's a presiding spirit in several pieces. **Jason Reeve's** drumming emphasises the off beats, creating tension, and **Nick Pini's** double bass solo is a expressive counterpoint to the piano's lines. Most of the solos are by the bassists, over textures created by piano and drums. *Einaudito* (A tribute to minimalist composer Ludovico Einaudi?) has something of Stravinsky's *Cinq Doigts* for Piano Solo. The repeated motifs move slowly though the keys like overlapping waves. *Perludio* has a strong narrative sense, almost cinematic, ending with a section recalling David Rees-Williams' reworking of Purcell.

Poppies is more romantic, and like Michel Legrand, Minardi uses classical cadences to create a gorgeous melody. The burnished cymbal sounds enhance the piano arpeggiation, rather than laying down a groove. Minardi names e.s.t. as an influence, and his piano solo here has imaginative, spiky rhythms. *Clapham Park* and *Breton* are romantic ballads- the first rubato with swooping arpeggios, the second with jazzier modal chords. **Felice Del Gaudio's** melodic bass solo on *Clapham Park* is particularly rich-toned. **Roberto Rossi's** fluttering cymbals are sensitive and percussive. Minardi's solo on *Breton* has a touch of Jimmy Rowles' *Peacocks* in its atonal yet emotive patterns.

Minardi also plays accordion, and recorded the tango *Tulipano Nero* with his Quartetto Magritte before this version. It has an urgency and intensity. Perhaps accordion tangos have influenced Minardi's piano style in the slower *Canicola*. Magritte (see the excellent Surrealist cover art!) has Nyman-esque flowing repeated phrases. There's a remixed, orchestrated version of this tune on the album too, reminding us of Minardi's earlier electro-funk ventures.

This CD should appeal to classical and jazz lovers alike. The overall feeling is tranquil and meditative- interesting, crafted writing, fine playing and above all a strong emotional appeal.

Live on Saturday 21st July 2012 at 9pm at Oliver's Jazz Club, 9 Nevada Street, Greenwich, London SE10 9JN / www.mauriziominardi.com

On Monday, July 16, 2012

"My Piano Trio ably demonstrates Minardi's strengths as a composer and musician, crossing the bridge between two musical worlds with imagination and grace." (All About Jazz, August 2012)

Maurizio Minardi: My Piano Trio (2012)

By **BRUCE LINDSAY**, Published: August 10, 2012

There's something rather endearing and self-effacing about Maurizio Minardi's decision to name this album *My Piano Trio*—even if the title isn't strictly accurate. The unpretentious title reflects the accessible and open nature of the music, but it's actually the product of two talented and imaginative trios: one from the UK, and the other from Italy.

Minardi studied music in Bologna, Italy, before moving to London in 2008. He's released half a dozen albums, written jingles and worked with the Royal Shakespeare Company. On *My Piano Trio* he's joined on three tunes by the British partnership of bassist [Nick Pini](#) and drummer [Jason Reeve](#) and, on the remaining numbers, by his Italian compatriots, bassist [Roberto Rossi](#) and drummer [Felice Del Gaudio](#). The music draws on a mix of jazz and European classical music, with the classical influence often emerging most strongly; the result is a set that sometimes sounds like jazz with a classical edge (the dream-like "Breton" and "Canicola") and, at other times, like jazz-influenced classical music ("Tulipano Nero" or "Einaudito").

The UK trio displays its jazz influences a little more overtly than does the Italian group, thanks especially to Reeve's percussion which tends to punctuate and emphasize in contrast with Rossi's more flowing rhythms. "Shiny" and "Perludio" both have touches of the [Esbjörn Svensson Trio](#) (one of Minardi's acknowledged influences); "Poppies" blends Minardi's classical piano stylings, with Pini's strong bass lines and Reeve's skipping cymbal work.

Minardi also presents two versions of one tune. "Magritte," named perhaps as a tribute to another of Minardi's projects, the jazz-tango group Quartetto Magritte—perhaps in recognition of René Magritte, the Belgian artist who has clearly inspired the album's cover design—features Minardi's arpeggios and Del Gaudio's spacious, considered solo. "Magritte (Remix)" gets a reworking with the addition of some electronic effects. The result is a busier, more energetic tune with a hypnotic atmosphere.



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Overwhelmingly, whether it's Del Gaudio and Rossi or Pina and Reeves who join Minardi, the music evokes a sense of serenity—a relaxed, controlled, beauty. *My Piano Trio* ably demonstrates Minardi's strengths as a composer and musician, crossing the bridge between two musical worlds with imagination and grace.

Track Listing: Shiny; Poppies; Einaudito; Preludio; Clapham Park; Canicola; Magritte; Tulipano Nero; Breton; Magritte (Remix).

Personnel: Maurizio Minardi: piano; Felice Del Gaudio: double bass (3, 5-10); Roberto Rossi: drums (3, 5-10); Nick Pini: double bass (1, 2, 4); Jason Reeve: drums (1, 2, 4).

Record Label: Belfagor Label

["Minardi... has long established himself as one of the finest pianists on... the British jazz scene and beyond." \(Rainlore's World of Music, August 2012\)](#)

My Piano Trio

Maurizio Minardi's latest recording project, *My Piano Trio* was released in February this year on Belfagor Label. It was recorded with two different line-ups, one being with Jason Reeve on drums and Nick Pini on bass, recorded in London, the other with Roberto Rossi on drums and Felice Del Gaudio on bass, recorded in Bologna, Italy.

Both trios are of equal calibre, and indeed you would be very hard put to tell them apart on this album. The calibre being, of course, most excellent indeed. Not that you would expect anything less from Minardi, who has long established himself as one of the finest pianists on, and a great enrichment to and asset of the British jazz scene and beyond. Both ensemble playing and soloing are simply a dream.

I am sorely tempted to call *My Piano Trio* an album of neo-baroque jazz - in the nicest way possible, that is. However, this would not be doing justice to Minardi and this most exquisite album. Other influences make their presence felt strongly too, in particular tango and jazz tango, with touches of rumba, impressionism, and more. *My Piano Trio* is a beautiful, natural, unforced kind of fusion that really deliciously defies pigeon-holing. *Magritte*, for example, although the title seems to also reference one of Minardi's other, jazz tango, ensembles, seems to beautifully follow the surrealist principle of incongruity. You might, from the previous sentence, assume that this piece has predominant jazz tango leanings. Not so. The dominant feel of this piece is somewhat impressionist, reminding of the music of Debussy or Ravel, or the paintings of Degas, while of course *Magritte* was a surrealist painter. A further surrealist reference might be the title *Breton*, which could refer to surrealist poet André Breton and certainly seems to.

As one might almost expect with an album of this kind, all pieces are original Minardi compositions, and superb they are, too, of course. It would be very hard to find fault with them.

It is very difficult to say much about an album of this quality without sounding decidedly trite. To even mention consistency is wholly unnecessary, and as for being compelling, *My Piano Trio* is far beyond that, it is completely mesmerising, putting one under an irresistible spell. Its magnetism cannot be overcome, it is futile to even try. But who would want to? One just wants to hear this exquisite, beautiful, brilliant music over and over again. Even completely disregarding my admitted love of the piano trio, *My Piano Trio* is music to seriously, hopelessly fall in love with. And it's **my** piano trio, you can't have it!

But all the same, Maurizio Minardi's superb, even stunning *My Piano Trio* is an absolute must have for any jazz piano trio, and for that matter, any serious jazz connoisseur. It will without doubt also appeal to the baroque/classical music lover with an open mind. Or anyone with an open mind. So go and buy it then!

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