

= Solo (Gonzalo Rubalcaba album) =

Solo is a studio album by Cuban jazz performer Gonzalo Rubalcaba . It was released by Blue Note Records on March 7 , 2006 , and peaked at number 22 in the Billboard Top Jazz Albums chart . The album is titled Solo since no additional performers were included on the recording as in Rubalcaba 's previous albums .

Also produced by Rubalcaba , Solo was released following his second collaborative work with Charlie Haden on the album Land of the Sun , which resulted in a Grammy Award for Haden . The album includes fifteen tracks and met with mostly positive reviews by critics , most commenting on the ability of the performer and the simplicity of the arrangements . The album was nominated for a Billboard Latin Music Award , and won the Latin Grammy for Best Latin Jazz Album .

= = Background and release = =

Cuban pianist Gonzalo Rubalcaba recorded Solo following his collaboration with Charlie Haden on Land of the Sun , an album featuring songs written by Mexican composer José Sabre Marroquin and arranged by Rubalcaba , a sequel to Nocturne (2001) , another collaboration between them . Haden and Rubalcaba were awarded the Grammy Award for Best Latin Jazz Album for both albums . Solo was the first solo album (not featuring guest musicians) released by the performer in twenty years . Rubalcaba described this album as an " aural diary , an album of secrets , letters and notes , and photos . " The album was released by Blue Note Records on March 7 , 2006 .

= = Content = =

Solo includes fifteen tracks , some previously released . Recording sessions took place from November 8 to 10 , 2005 , at The Hit Factory and Criteria Studios in Miami , Florida . There are four improvised tracks inspired by John Coltrane 's Giant Steps : " Paseo Iluminado " , " Paseo en Media Luz " , " Paseo Azul " , and " Paseo Morado " . " Iluminado (Improv # 1) " , according to Roberto R. Calder of PopMatters , has " stock phrasing , but a pause in concentration before the sublime quality of a one @-@ minute lullaby worth waiting for " ; " Media Luz (Improv # 2) " " hints at jazz with concert @-@ room sonorities and a striking ending " ; " Azul (Improv # 3) " " proceeds with more consistent direction than its two predecessors " and becomes a hymn " ; and " Morado (Improv # 4) " " develops into long linear passages for each hand . " " Faro " is a track with " a simple ostinato bass , a transition section and a loud climax . " The opening track , " Rezo " , is an interlude inspired by the work of French composer Claude Debussy and American performer Duke Ellington , and is " based on Afro @-@ Cuban melodies sung during Santería rites . " " Silencio " is a tribute to Cuban boleros . " Prologo (Prologue to a Fantasy) " features a " congenial intellectual playfulness alternating between something like Spanish piano music of a century ago , and the dance @-@ hall . " " Bésame Mucho " was first included on the 1991 album The Blessing , Rubalcaba 's first recording to be issued in the United States , and the version was named by Scott Yanow of Allmusic a " highlight " of the album , including accompaniment from Haden on bass guitar and drummer Jack DeJohnette . A reworked version is included on Solo , and is described as having an " intensely meditative character and slow deliberation , " and " a more complex higher level of communication " than the original version . " Here 's That Rainy Day " is a jazz ballad , recorded earlier for the album Inner Voyage , with an arrangement described as " breathtaking " by Ken Dryden of Allmusic . The first version of " Quasar " can be found on Paseo (2004) ; and the version included on Solo is described as " seven minutes of drama , " by Calder of PopMatters , with " a sprawling , improv @-@ heavy composition that runs Rubalcaba up and down the keyboard . "

= = Reception = =

Solo received mostly positive reviews from critics . Andrew Liengard of Jazz Houston stated that Rubalcaba played " at once a pyrotechnical and thunderous two @-@ handed assault , he also

demonstrates a profound awareness of space and dynamics , " and finally called the album " stunning " . Joey Guerra of Amazon said that Solo " finds Rubalcaba soaring on the strength of his own talent " , creating a " unique experience . " Website Allmusic stated that the album is a spellbinding collection of improvisations with " remarkable stylistic display . " Harvey Siders of JazzTimes commented that the album did not need elaborate arrangements , being a " spontaneous inner dialogue from a brilliant inquisitive mind " and that on Solo " elegance trumps excitement . " PopMatters ' Robert R. Calder stated that the record was " a very remarkable solo piano recital . " David Miller of All About Jazz gave the album a mixed review , being critical of the entertainment value , stating that the performer " is more introspective than ever , frequently using silence as his means of expression . The only problem is , it doesn 't necessarily work . " Miller also suggested that " Rubalcaba should develop his ideas in more conventional settings . He still has time to become a great solo artist , and this writer has every confidence that he will . " In a separate review , Jim Santella , also of All About Jazz , praised Solo , commenting that Rubalcaba " finds space in his exploratory interpretation for dreamy soliloquies , but the excitement is all there , and it 's powerful . The pianist makes us wait for this moment , and it 's always worth the anticipation . Ultimately he lights an inspiring fire . " Mark Corroto , in a third review of the album by All About Jazz , compared Rubalcaba 's work to fellow Cuban artist Bebo Valdés , asseverating that both performers " blurred the lines between jazz , classical and folk , easily convincing you there need be no distinction . " Timothy Sprinkle of Jazz Review declared that the performer " carries the disc with a light , breezy ease that 's surprising , especially given all of the slow selections . "

Solo peaked at number 22 in the Billboard Top Jazz Albums chart and was nominated for " Latin Jazz Album of the Year " at the 18th Annual Billboard Latin Music Awards , losing to Around the City by Eliane Elias . Rubalcaba earned the Latin Grammy Award for Best Latin Jazz Album at the 7th Latin Grammy Awards for Solo .

= = Track listing = =

The track listing is from Allmusic . All tracks written and composed by Gonzalo Rubalcaba , except " Nightfall " by Charlie Haden ; " Bésame Mucho " by Consuelo Velázquez ; and " Here 's That Rainy Day " by Johnny Burke and James Van Heusen .

= = Personnel = =

This information is adapted from Allmusic .