

Diego Pínera

The Art of Modern Latin Jazz Drums



Foto: BVMI / Wuestenhagen

ECHO Jazz 2017

Best instrumentalist national drums/percussion



Nominated for the JAZZ ECHO Instrumentalist
drums/percussion national 2015

Winner at the International Songwriting Competition 2015
with *my picture*



“Diego is a wonderful musician who is comfortable playing a variety of styles. His knowledge of latin music and his ability to express the fundamentals of that musical language is uncanny.”

Donny McCaslin

“Diego a young and incredible drummer, show’s in his wonderful compositions the same vision and maturity as his drumming.”

Pernell Saturnino, percussionist of
Chick Corea and Paquito D’Rivera



“...Pinera also possess a rare sensibility as a composer that sets him apart from other accomplished young rhythmatisms on the kit. ... It’s easy to see why the abundantly talented Pinera was chosen for this edition of Germany’s ‘Jazzthing Next Generation’ series of releases. He’s a star in the making.”

Bill Milkowski, Down Beat 2/15



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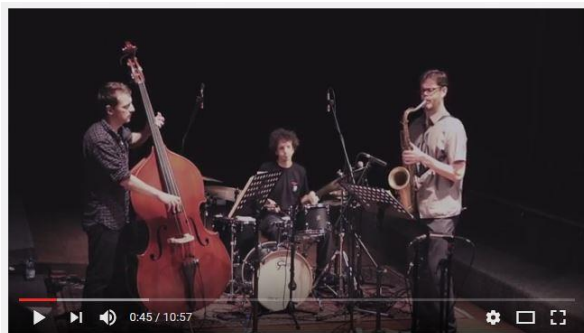
Daniel Lindenblatt
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Recommended Videos



Diego Pinera Trio - Bart w/Donny McCaslin & Phil Donkin @Cascadas Club, Hamburg

<https://youtu.be/fdQym12YtHw>



Diego Pinera Trio - my picture - my picture tour w/Donny McCaslin & Phil Donkin

<https://youtu.be/BH64V0jb9CU>



my picture - New Hope (Full Studiotake, w/Mark Turner & Ben Street)

https://youtu.be/a_5J6sPR_CE



Diego Pinera Quartett – Viernes 13 – Release Concert 2014 “Strange Ways”

<https://youtu.be/7zlW275DirM>

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Diego Pinera was born in Montevideo (Uruguay). He moved to Germany in 2003, where he now still resides. Pinera studied drums at the Berklee College of Music (USA), at the University of Music in Havana (Cuba) and at the University of Music and Theater in Leipzig (Germany). He



was honored to receive individual masterclasses by Grammy Artist José Louis “Changuito” Quintana. As a sideman he has played with musicians such as Jerry Bergonzi, Danilo Perez, Hans Glawischnig, Dan Tepfer, Alex Sipiagin, Miguel Zenon, Wilson de Oliveira, Tony Lakatos, Nene Vazquez, Joe Gallardo, Katja Riemann, Nils Wogram, Leon Gurvitch and Paul Brody. With his Quartett (with Peter Ehwald, Tino Derado and Phil Donkin) he presents in his compositions a new and unusual approach to Latin Jazz. Sometimes he brings his music closer to Pop and Modern Jazz styles rather than sticking to traditional Latin Jazz styles, often concentrating on the original, rich rhythmic aspects of his

improvisational approach. Nonetheless, his way of playing is deeply ankered in the traditional music of Latin America and jazz tradition as well.

After releasing “Strange Ways” which was published by the german magazine Jazzthing as “Jazz thing Next Generation” he achieved his next milestone in his career. He formed a trio in New York with Mark Turner and Ben Street and recorded his album “my picture”. In May 2016 he was lucky to receive Donny McCaslin and Phil Donkin during the release tour of ‘my picture’ through Germany. In June 2017 he received the ECHO Jazz as best instrumentalist drums/percussion based on his recording ‘my picture’. Diego Pinera is the first german-uruguay citizen who received that award in the national category.

Since April 2017 Diego Pinera signed with ACT Music and is looking forward to release his next album in January 2017.

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Diego Pinera - my picture

w/ Mark Turner | Ben Street

All good things come in threes.

By Wolf Kampmann

The triangle is the most stable geometric construction. A three legged stool may be crooked, but it does not wobble. A square is only stable, if it is split into two or more triangles and even a circle consists basically of infinitely equilateral triangles that run at an acute angle towards the joint center. But the natural law, percent to geometry and abrogated, in almost all cases, in projects with a fixed star and to be different, it is godsend.



which applies one hundred structural analysis, is Jazz. Usually trios are solo two satellites. If it turns out

The Diego Pinera Trio is such a Turner, bassist Ben Street and create a stable triangle, where defined by the vertex but by the common enclosed area. This is all the more surprising as the fractions of the three protagonists and the intensity of the trio are variable, not only from tune to tune, but also within the tunes. Without that, the established coordinates of solo and accompaniment within the trio would manifest themselves - all three musicians play with the same passion, the creative fractions are and remain evenly distributed - constantly shifting the center of gravity and the communicative moment.

blessing. Saxophonist Mark drummer Diego Pinera the page length is not

The three emanates a magic, which is used by religions, fairy tales, myths and literary figures. The Holy Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Virgin and Child with Saint Anne, the Three Wise Men from the East are just three examples of Christian mythology. The three theological virtues are faith, love, and hope. Three times black cat, three wishes, the three feathers, the three Musketeers, the three from the gas station, it is always three times in the one, a holistic approach resulting in a three-way split.

This one or singularity as three is what is so impressive about the trio of Diego Pinera. It is not about what different contexts Mark Turner invents, nor the long list of musicians with whom Ben Street has played with. In this particular Trinity it is only about what happens in this, and in no other moment. That is amazing, exciting, and unpredictable. The three musicians are free to use all of their imagination because they can completely trust in the stable constellation. Because

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each of them combines holistically what is currently played and what is expected by the two other collaborators. There are three individual musicians who bring in their whole backgrounds, but there is also the association of three intentions to a Meta impulse that is completely detached from its origins.

It is an expression of the creative force of Pinera, Street and Turner that by all spiritual poetry of their trio context they stay present and earthbound. All three are constantly transmitting and receiving between each other, but they transmit together. All this is based on the grounds of jazz and using elements of jazz. But this music embodies much more than what the categorical



shortening of a genre can do. It is the uniqueness of a special and distinctively playful moment which you can only hear from this and no other context.

To be a part of this moment is everything. To be a part of the fundament, the architecture of the execution, and the spirit of the continuation - a further division by three.

Comment by Diego Pinera

I wrote the music especially with the individual sound from Mark Turner and Ben Street in mind and it tooked me one year to compose this album. It was the first time for me to compose for a saxophone trio setting. I start listening and analyzing this kind of setting beginning with Sonny Rollings Trio and ending by The Fly. I was also lucky to have my friends, long time colleagues and exceptional musicians Peter Ehwald and Tino Derado who gaves me some really nice ideas as well.

But I also get inspired from people with whom I was playing together like Sebastian Schunke, Phil Donkin, Nils Wogram.

The compositions on My Picture represent finally what I really like in music: some odd meters, polyrhythmic, odd meter claves, melodic development and harmonies. I love to switch between formal structure and free improvisation. In retrospective I believe I found a nice balance between all those elements at the end.

At the morning of the 7th of January I realized that the day was arriving I have been working for a whole year. Everybody arrived at the studio, Nancy from the studio gaves us a warm welcome and we all started to prepare us for the recording. Already at the soundcheck the people from the

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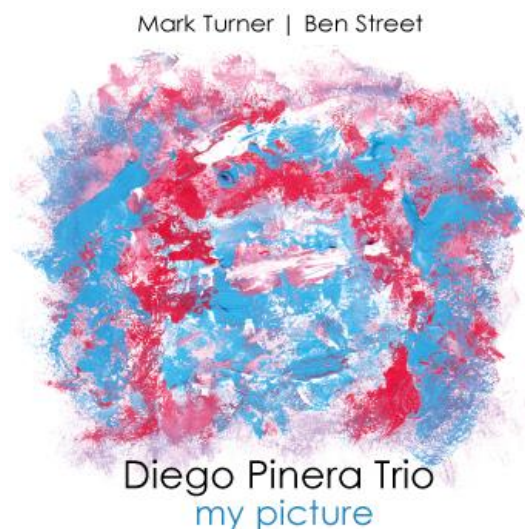
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studio realized that it could be a very good recording day. I felt so appreciated to could do that under such honorable circumstances.

The recording button was pressed and we played the first song and suddenly I felt that everybody was just start giving so much input, Ideas, getting involved in the process. The session was awesome!

Nearly the whole session are One take recordings! We finished the session earlier than planned and everybody felt pleased.

I said: "Wanna play some more? Why not a standard?" Ben and Mark, "Sure!" On the way to the instrument Mark and Ben sat on the piano to check some harmonic idea, changes and their experience with that standard. I also took just a phenomenal first take!



Tracklisting

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------|
| 1. Open Window | 5:59 min. |
| 2. Cuidado | 4:35 min. |
| 3. New Hope | 6:49 min. |
| 4. Evidence | 3:40 min. |
| 5. Today | 7:13 min. |
| 6. Bart | 6:36 min. |
| 7. My Picture | 8:07 min. |
| 8. The New One | 6:53 min. |
| 9. This Song Is You | 4:33 min. |

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Kat.Nr.: OSR-21601

Diego Pinera, drums | Mark Turner, sax | Ben Street, doublebass.

All compositions by Diego Pinera, except #4 by T. Monk. Recorded on 7th january 2015 at Systems Two Studios, NY.

Mixed and Masterd by Wolfgang Schiefermaier. This recording was supported by the berlin goverment for cultural affairs. Octason Records.

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Diego Pinera Quartett

The Diego Pinera Quartet is a working band. Although each musician is involved in several projects they make sure to have regular concerts as a band. The most of the compositions are written by Diego Pinera but each musician's task is to recreate the written music in something own, so it is impossible to change the line up without losing the actual band sound.

All of the four musicians have their own experiences with latin-american music. Diego Pinera itself, borned in Uruguay grew up with a lot different influences of latin-american music culture, especially with his home country traditional music "candombe". He early started to get interested in more different kind of music. At the age of 18 years he went to Havanna (Cuba) at the University of music to study the afro-cuban music and at 2001 he received a scholarship at Berklee College of music in Boston. There he was taught by Danilo Perez. From that point of his career he intensively developed his unique style mixing traditional percussion based latin-american music with jazz.

The musical importance and influences of Diego Pinera on that Quartett is high but that band just exists cause of each high quality of every musicians. They create a sound between modern jazz and latin-american based rhythms.

At November 2010 the Quartett got the possibility to invite Tony Lakatos for a recording session. With the help of a friend at the same time owner of a small independent jazz label the Diego Pinera Quartet could realize some extraordinary recordings featuring Tony Lakatos.



Line Up

Diego Pinera (dr./comp.) | Peter Ehwald (sax.) | Tino Derado (p.) | Phil Donkin (b.)

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Release August 2014

D. Pinera Quartett - Strange Ways

Strange Ways raises the rhythmic, harmonic and improvisational potentials of contemporary Latin jazz to a new level.

This project continues drummer and composer Diego Piñera's education in the meters of Latin rhythm and the techniques used to interpret these beats in their purest form. Piñera studied at the Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy University of Music and Theatre in Leipzig, the Berklee College of Music in Boston, and the University of the Arts in Cuba. Drawing on his experience from previous recordings, including his solo project *Reflexiones*, his focus has turned to innovating modern Latin jazz.



The Album

The rhythmic changes in *Strange Ways* make it one of the album's most musically complex songs. Composed in 6/8, 7/8 and 4/4 time, Diego creates a unique counterpoint between melody and bass. *Train Trip* is in a 9/4 time, unfolds along a bass line, and

changes to 4/4 time in the second part. *NY Session* recreates Diego's experiences at a live concert in New York. *The Struggle* is a "jazz waltz" à la Elvin Jones. The song *Paro o sigo* develops with irregular timing, switching between 4/4, 5/4 and 2/4. Its unique bass line lends the piece a sense of simultaneous movement and calm. The ballad *Waiting for...* is charged with musicality and expression. *Viernes 13* was composed in 13/4, a time signature created by Diego. *More Busy* features a continuously changing meter with a focus on drums. In the melancholic ballad *Círculo vicioso*, Diego attempts to convey the feeling of entering an emotional circle or facing circumstances with no way out.

Bonus Track

White Spring, composed for soprano saxophone and string quartet, showcases Diego's innovative musical journeys.

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1. Strange Ways (6:22)
2. Train Trip (4:21)
3. NY Session (7:00)
4. The Struggle (5:52)
5. Paro o sigo (6:03)
6. Waiting for... (2:58)
7. Viernes 13 (6:10)
8. More Busy (5:22)
9. Círculo vicioso (5:25)
10. White Spring – bonus track (5:17)

Musicians

Tino Derado – Piano
Phil Donkin – Contrabass
Peter Ehwald – Soprano saxophone

Bonus Track

Rodrigo Bauza – First violin
Johanes Ditmar – Viola
Peter Ehwald – Soprano saxophone
Federico Nathan – Second violin
Constanz Ricard – Cello

Recorded at Greve Studio, Berlin (October-December 2013)

Christoph Schlimbach – Sound engineer

Wolfgang Schiefermair – Mixing and mastering

Assistant to Diego Piñera – Daniel Lindenblatt

Diego Piñera uses Canopus drums / Meinl cymbals / Promark sticks / Terre percussion

A Diego Piñera / Santacruz International Communication Production

Executive producer – Lino Santacruz

Graphic design (CD artwork) – Paul Bieri

Photography – Oscar Maceda

Studio – Rodrigo Vázquez

Photography assistant – Fabián García Herrera

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Diego Piñera Strange Ways

DOUBLE MOON 71141

★★★★½

Down Beat 2/15

Drummer, composer and arranger Diego Piñera, born and bred in Uruguay and currently residing in Berlin, is adept at complex rhythms and shifting time signatures, as heard on the subtly Latin-tinged title track, which nimbly shifts from intricate 6/8 and 7/8 patterns to all-out 4/4 swing, or his "Paro O Sigo," which travels from 4/4 to 5/4 to 2/4, or "Viernes 13," which has him traversing the kit and injecting hip fills in 13/4 time. But Piñera also possesses a rare sensibility as a composer that sets him apart from other accomplished young rhyth-

matists on the kit. His thoughtful ballad "Waiting For ..." and the graceful yet melancholy "Circulo Vicioso," for example, are both lyrical gems. His "Train Trip" is a masterful example of tension and release in 9/4 time that also carries a hint of Wayne Shorter's writing from his *Atlantis* period. Piñera's looseness on his jazz waltz "The Struggle" recalls Elvin Jones' inimitable touch on the kit.

Piñera, who cites Antonio Sanchez as his role model, is aided in this stellar outing by the contributions of experienced veterans like stalwart bassist Phil Donkin and saxophonist Peter Ehwald, who wields a powerhouse tenor on the title track and on the aggressive free-blowing vehicle "The Struggle," then offers probing lines on "Train Trip" and a touch of poignancy on "Waiting For ...". The secret weapon in this quartet just might be pianist Tino Derado, whose well-placed comping and brilliant soloing enhance each track. The bonus track here features the drummer engaged in an interactive dance with soprano sax and string quartet in a kind of chamber jazz triumph. It's easy to see why the abundantly talented Piñera was chosen for this edition of Germany's "Jazzthing Next Generation" series of releases. He's a star in the making.

—Bill Milkowski

Strange Ways: Strange Ways; Train Trip; Waiting For ...; Paro O Sigo; Viernes 13; Circulo Vicioso; NY Session; More Busy; The Struggle; White Spring. (55:04)

Personnel: Diego Piñera, drums, percussion; Tino Derado, piano; Phil Donkin, bass; Peter Ehwald, tenor, soprano saxophone.

Ordering info: doublemoon.de; challengerecords.com



Diego Piñera Trio

MY PICTURE

(Octason Rec.)

Der in Uruguay geborene, in Deutschland lebende Drummer zeigt mit seinem Trio (b, sax), wie zeitgenössischer Jazz klingen kann. Piñera komponiert zumeist selbst und liefert mit diesem Album eine phantastische, nicht nur spieltechnisch höchstanspruchsvolle, sondern auch überaus geschmackvolle und in sich stimmige Arbeit, die den Begriff »Latin-Jazzdrumming« auf ein ganz neues Niveau hebt. Es ist weit mehr als die vielen Spielereien, das Pineras Arbeit so bemerkenswert macht.

ib

MUSIK
★★★★★
DRUMMING

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Diego Pinera Trio

My Picture

Octason Records

Im Gegensatz zu den unübersichtlich aus dem Boden schießenden Klaviertrios ist die Dreieinigkeit von Saxophon, Bass und Schlagzeug seltener. Es bedarf immensen Könnens und Ideenreichtums, die Spannung aufrechtzuerhalten, wenn man ohne Netz und doppelten Boden agiert. Spontan denkt man an wegweisende Aufnahmen von Sonny Rollins „Way Out West“ oder an diverse Trio-Einspielungen von Saxophonisten wie Bennie Wallace oder David Murray, die dabei oft charismatisch im Mittelpunkt agierten.

Anders verhält es sich im Fall der Einspielungen des uruguayischen Schlagzeugers Pinera, dessen sieben Kompositionen, Monks „Evidence“ und das die CD beschließende „The song is you“ aus der Feder Hammersteins die thematische Grundlage für eine einstündige, spannungsreiche und gefühlvolle Konversation mit dem wundervollen Saxophonisten Mark Turner und dem Bassisten Ben Street bilden. Das Cover zielt eine Zeichnung Pineras, in der drei Farbtöne wie der Klang der Instrumente miteinander verschmelzen. Alle drei verzichten auf egomanische Darstellungen ihres Könnens, verstehen sich in ihrer technischen Brillanz als Ganzheit, zeichnen mit viel Empathie ein akustisches Gemälde von fesselnder Dynamik und betörender Schönheit, schaffen mit innerer Ruhe Freiräume für assoziative Gedankengänge, die den Hörer in einen akustischen Strudel ziehen. Je häufiger man die Aufnahmen hört, umso spürbarer wird die geniale Struktur der Stücke in ihrer Intensität und Vielschichtigkeit und dass man schlussendlich einem kleinen Meisterwerk lauscht.

Detlef A. Ott



Diego Pinera My Picture

●●●●

Octason/Pool Music

Oft überzeugen Schlagzeuger als Komponisten nicht wirklich. Beispiele dafür gäbe es zu Hauf. Das trifft auf Diego Pinera nicht zu. Nahezu alle Stücke zu seinem Bild hat er auch selbst gemalt, nur je einmal weicht man auf Monk und Hammerstein aus, was ich aber sehr wichtig finde, denn so kann man mit den beiden bekannten Tunes die Spielart der Musiker noch einfacher kennenlernen, und „Evidence“ und „The Song Is You“

sind dafür bestens geeignet. Pinera schafft es mit Leichtigkeit, den Saxophonisten Mark Turner und den Bassisten Ben Street in Szene zu setzen, trotzdem merkt man am Spiel des Schlagzeugers, dass er das Heft in der Hand hält. Mark Turner und Ben Street gehören zum Who is Who des Jazz der Gegenwart und das zu Recht. Außerdem gefällt mir dieser trockene Sound, der eben auch ohne Klavier auskommen kann und wo man nie auf die Idee käme, dass irgendetwas fehlen würde. Umso deutlicher kann man der Kommunikation der drei Musiker folgen, und die ist spannend und energiegeladen genug, und wenn eingangs geschrieben steht, dass Pinera das Heft in der Hand hält, stimmt das nur, was die Kompositionen angeht, das Spiel selbst erfolgt in vollendeter Gleichberechtigung.

bak

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Drummer Diego Pinera, also from Montevideo, now resides in Berlin, where he recorded *Strange Ways*, Vol. 54 of Köln-based *Jazz Thing* magazine's "Next Generation" series. Like Gonzalez, he trained at Berklee, as well as conservatories in Leipzig and Havana. The all-original album is a quartet effort (tenor saxophone, piano, bass and drums), the final track augmented by classical string quartet. Most of the straight eighth-note often modulating tunes are based on rhythms in odd meters, between—or even within—sections. The title cut shifts among six- and seven-beat groups, almost like a double-time version of Herbie Hancock's "Maiden Voyage", before settling into 4/4 swing. The group's sound is enhanced by Peter Ehwald's taut tenor work and a fine soprano solo on "More Work" and Tino Derado's flexible piano. Generally restrained, they loosen up a bit on "NY Session", with positive results.



The New York City Jazz Record, January 2015

Jazzthing
& blue rhythm

In seinem Drumming und seinen teils auch recht expressiven Kompositionen, die sich auf »Strange Ways« finden, präsentiert er eine ganz eigene und herausfordernde Mischung aus Latin-, Modern-Jazz und Bop, ... Neben schönen Melodien lauern in den

Arrangements zahlreiche Untiefen, die Pinera mit seinem technisch ausgereiftesten und dennoch geschmacksichern Drumming sicher zu umschiffen vermag ...

Musik: ★★★★★ Drumming: ★★★★★ “

Jazzthing, 12/2014

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Drummers sometimes make the most interesting bandleaders, especially when they gently nudge the other musicians in the ensemble into developing contrapuntal responses to odd meters and pulses. This recording, *Strange Ways*, like many others that features rhythmists from Latin America in situations with musicians from other parts of the world is a fine example. The Uruguayan drummer, Diego Piñera seems to be constantly challenging his partners to re-think possibilities as he brings to his music the folkloric elements of Uruguay.



Raul de Gama, Source: <http://latinjazznet.com/2014/11/06/reviews/cds/diego-pinera-strange-ways/>

„...ein herrliches Album ...“

Götz Bühler, *Jazzthing-MixTape* auf ByteFM, über ‚Reflexiones‘

Obwohl gerade mal 30 Jahre alt, hat der gebürtige Uruguayer Diego Pinera schon einige Karrierestationen hinter sich. Von seiner Heimat über Kuba und die USA kam er 2003 nach Berlin, wo er sich rasch einen Namen als vielseitiger Schlagzeuger machen konnte. Gerade erschienen ist sein neues Album „Reflexiones“, im Quintett unter anderem mit Tony Lakatos aufgenommen. Und tatsächlich: Darauf macht sich Pinera Gedanken, wie unterschiedlich Latin Jazz doch erklingen kann. Mal rückt er diesen nah an den Pop und Modern Jazz heran, mal konzentriert er sich auf die ursprüngliche, vielschichtige Rhythmik dieser Improvisationsmusik.



Jazzthing (Sept. 2011)



Auf „Reflexiones“ gibt's neun Kompositionen zu hören, die sich im weitesten Sinne im (expressiven) Latin-Jazz-Idiom bewegen. Bemerkenswert daran ist vor allem Pineras sehr eigene Heransgehensweise an das Schlagzeugspielen, dessen Facetten zwischen lateinamerikanischen Wurzeln bis hin zu bekennd jazzigen Ausbrüchen er hire - mit eine klassisch akustischen Trio/Quartett - bis auf den letzten Millimeter auszuloten weiß. Dennoch kommt die Platte flüssig, luftig und erfreulich persönlich daher. Ein spannendes Album!

Drums & Percussion, Aug.2011

"Diego Pinera kommt aus Uruguay, ist noch recht jung und trommelt dennoch schon wie ein Großer. Seine Musik ist Latin und Jazz, und neben dem Drumset beherrscht er auch die Timbales in Perfektion. Seine Demo-DVD bietet einige interessante Soli, wobei die Left Foot Clave natürlich zu den Selbstverständlichkeiten gehört. Zudem gibt es interessante Audiofiles und Konzertausschnitte mit der Sebastian Schunke Band. Die DVD ist mit einfachen Mitteln produziert und lässt schon erahnen, dass hier ein wirklich guter Musiker heranwächst, der seit einiger Zeit in Berlin lebt und arbeitet.“

Heinz Kronberger, Drums & Percussion Magazine, September/October 2007

Festivalauftritte

Nordsea Festival, Jazzfestival „Garana Jazz festival“ Rumänien,, Riga Ritmi Jazzfestival, Dresdener Drumfestival, Jazzfestival „Jazztour“, Festival International Naganagua Venezuela, Bogota Jazzfestival in der Teatro Libre, Guangdong Jazzfestival China, Jazzfestival Lima Peru, Malta Jazzfestival

Preise

Berklee Generation 2002, 1. Preis
Jazz and Blues Awards Berlin 2005
Leipziger Jazzpreis 2011
ECHO JAZZ Nomination 2015
ECHO Jazz Best instrumentalist 2017

Endorsements



Diego Pinera is an artist of



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