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by Karl Kolbeck

L'occhio della betulla. CheRoba: Marco Santilli, clarinet/bass clarinet; Lorenzo Frizzera, twelve-string/classical guitar; Ivan Tibolla, piano/accordion; Fulvio Maras, percussion. M. Santilli: *Variationen über den Namen Hesse; Music des Einsamen; When Hermann meets Hari; L'occhio della betulla; Saphyrion; Serenada in minur; Gazzella; Agasul; Come le foglie; Love all, trust a few, do wrong to none.* Unit Records UTR4727. Total time 56:51. Amazon and iTunes

Clarinetist/composer Marco Santilli is joined by fellow members of CheRoba on **L'occhio della betulla**, a disc of original works composed for this unique jazz quartet. CheRoba consists of Santilli on clarinet and bass clarinet, Lorenzo Frizzera on twelve-string and classical guitar, Ivan Tibolla on piano and accordion, and Fulvio Maras on percussion. The ensemble performs with great synergy and all members' exhibit skillful musicianship, which lends perfectly to Santilli's compositions. Santilli's smooth tone and virtuosic technique on both clarinet and bass clarinet are a perfect complement to his skillful improvisation displayed on this disc. Occasional, tasteful use of extended techniques contribute to a heightened sense of energy and impact when appropriate.

In addition to his ability as a clarinetist and bass clarinetist, Marco Santilli is also a very skilled composer. Each carefully crafted work takes the listener on an aural journey through a sonic landscape interspersed with elements of classical, world music and jazz. Each track on the disc varies in style, but still works well as an overall concept for the album. Santilli's compositions are refreshingly original and truly highlight the talents of this ensemble and the capabilities of his instrument in this setting.

This recording is enjoyable and sure to be favored among clarinetists and non-clarinetists alike. Highly recommended.