

## Gabriel Vicéns

*Point in Time*  
(self-produced)

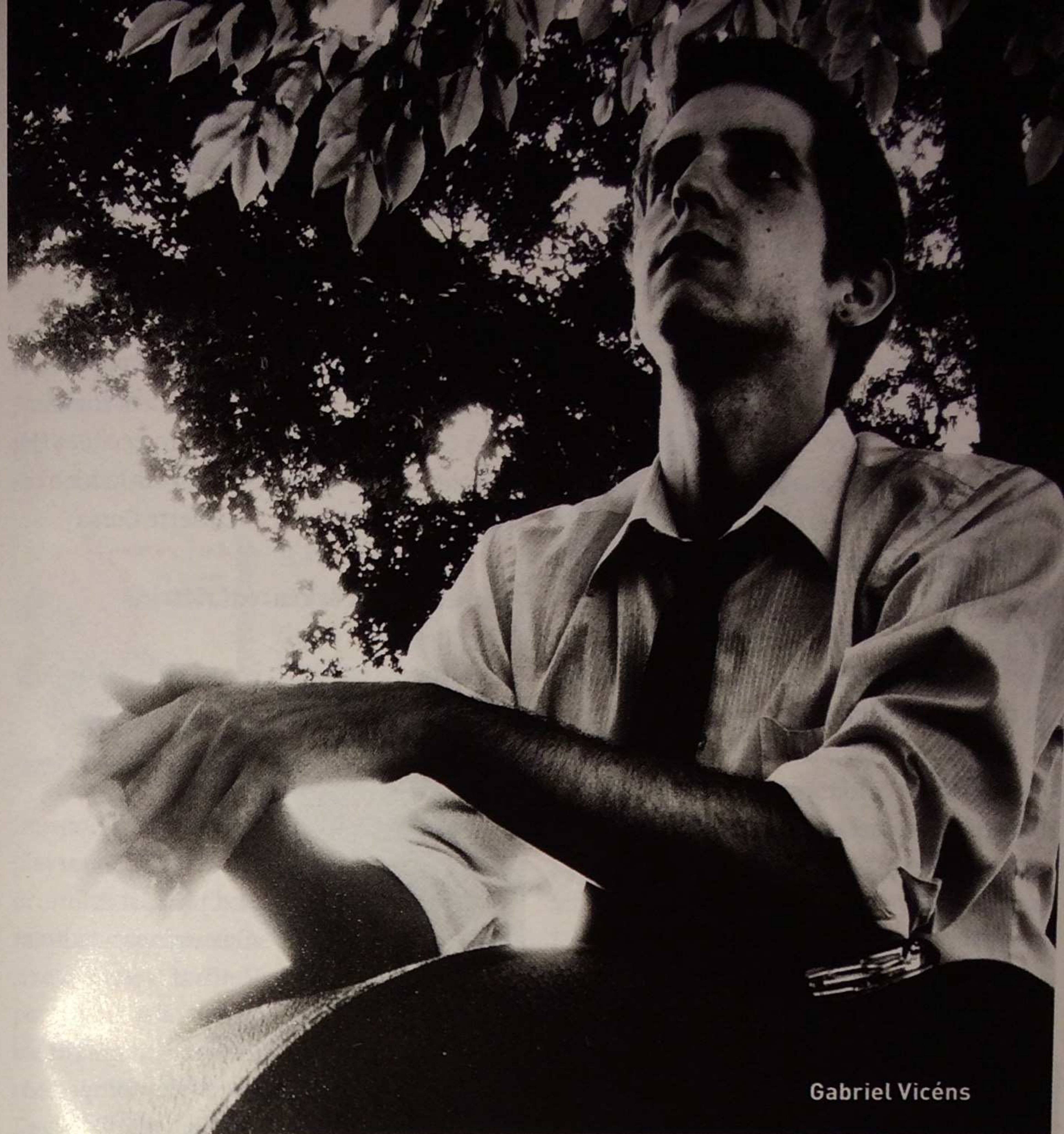
Gabriel Vicéns' *Point in Time* displays



exceptional maturity in composition and performance. As the Puerto Rican guitarist thoughtfully develops each improvised solo, it's easy to forget this is his

debut release. What's more, his beautifully crafted, thoroughly modern compositions fill the entire program. Puerto Rican stalwarts David Sánchez on tenor saxophone and Eddie Gómez on bass join in on several cuts, their instrumental offerings adding recognizable voices rather than raising the bar.

Vicéns and his regular band of like-minded Latinos — alto saxophonist Jonathan Suazo, pianist Eduardo Zayas and drummer Vladimir Coronel — along with Australian bassist Matt Clohesy, deliver stellar performances. This cohesive unit adds fire and depth to most of the dozen tracks. Mexican drummer Coronel especially shines. His percolating rhythms drive the band hard, although he never plays particularly loudly. His subtle transitions



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between 4/4, 5/8 and 12/8 time signatures cleverly morph into individual *clavés* that propel the band with intensity.

Understatement permeates the guitar solos. These usually begin with the rhythm section growing quiet and suspending time, leaving the spectrum of sonic possibilities wide open to their leader's whim. While shades of Metheny and Santana color the work, Vicéns has his own sound, marked by the subtle application of effects. He tends to employ restraint at the height of his solos, thus stirring listeners' desire for reckless abandon. But his reserve will likely dissolve over time.

Altoist Suazo cuts through the mix like a laser, with fresh, emotionally evocative lines. His solos often follow Vicéns', with the rhythm section maintaining the guitarist's fervor. Meanwhile, bassist Clohesy and pianist Zayas comp with syncopated passion, making this debut a steamy forecast of future endeavors. —James Rozzi