

Review of Paulo Morello's new CD "MOVING"

Author of the review: Klaus Huckert 11/21/2025

German guitarist **Paulo Morello**, who made a name for himself with around 15 CDs in the field of guitar jazz, will release his new work "Moving" on December 4, 2025. It was recorded in January 2025 with bassist, producer, and sound engineer **Sven Faller** and Brazilian drummer and percussionist **Mauro Martins**, an excellent grooving trio that has been working together for quite some time. GLM-Music is handling distribution of the CD.



CD cover

Looking at the selection of tracks on the CD, it can be divided into four areas: jazz standards, original Brazilian compositions, the guitarist's own works, and a composition by Israeli guitarist **Oren Levanon**.

The album opens with "The Birds and the Bees," a standard by Hungarian-German-American guitarist **Attila Zoller**. It is one of Zoller's best-known pieces and is a prime example of his lyrical style in modern jazz. The original composition appeared on the 1970 album "Gypsy Cry." Morello got to know and appreciate Zoller during his studies in New York. The interpretation of this title thrives on Morello's guitar artistry. The theme is presented in single-note licks and punctuated by excellent chord playing. The

bebop-tinged improvisation with influences from the 1960s lends this piece lightness, color, and catchiness. The foundation is laid by the springy, rhythmically complex interplay between Faller and Martins.

Morello is a self-confessed lover of Brazilian music. This can also be heard in the second track on the CD, "Flor do Cerrado" (English: "Flowers of the Cerrado"). The composer of this work is **Waldir Azevedo**, who was considered a virtuoso on the cavaquinho worldwide. This is a small, four-stringed guitar found in South American music. The work is a soundscape that celebrates the bright flowers of the Brazilian savannah (Cerrado). Stylistically, this is a choro that describes two emotional worlds, comparable to the two seasons of the savannah – rainy season and dry season. The melody begins slightly restrained, moves in stages toward the climax in a slightly jubilant and cheerful singing manner, and then falls into a slightly mournful mood, which Morello celebrates in his guitar playing. Congratulations to the guitar maestro and his two colleagues for this interpretation!

The same applies to the composition "Se Ela Perguntar," a standard work of classical Brazilian guitar literature written by composer and music teacher **Dilermando Reis**. His anachronistic, deeply romantic, and plaintive playing and compositional style is still revered by many fans today. Paulo begins alone with this dreamy and slightly melancholic melody. Uni-sono passages with bassist **Sven Faller** bring out the balladic character. A thoughtful, melodically sophisticated title with gentle, appropriate improvisation. Beautiful enough to make you cry!

The jazz standard "When Sunny Gets Blue" is reinterpreted. This bolero-style version is light, relaxed, and unobtrusive. Morello repeatedly quotes fragments of the theme, followed by improvisations in single-note mode with exceptional chord playing. Occasional broken chords add to the appeal of the piece. Faller and Martins support the song with their laid-back style.

The standard "We'll Be Together Again" contrasts with the previous songs, presented at a free tempo as a duet between bass and guitar in modern jazz style. Countless musicians have discovered "Beautiful Love" for themselves and created diverse interpretations that underscore its harmonic versatility.

Let's now turn to Morello's own compositions. "Cooking at the Birdland" pays tribute to the unique concert atmosphere at the Birdland jazz club in Neuburg an der Donau in Upper Bavaria. The funky piece is octaved à la **Wes Montgomery** and grooves. A crisp bass solo by **Sven Faller**, a driving beat by **Mauro Martins**, and the guitarist's joy of improvisation are the hallmarks of this composition. In "Entre As Ondas" (English: "Between the Waves"), bossa nova becomes the theme. The wistful, slightly melancholic title with a very interesting harmonic modulation and a beautiful depth evokes associations with a sunny beach in Brazil and the rolling waves of the sea. The

title song of the CD, "Moving," was penned by Morello. It features funk with a dash of blues/rock. Staccato-like and rhythmically exciting, this work contrasts with the other songs mentioned so far.

Conclusion:

- The sound is impressive, with clear distinctions between the guitar and rhythm section, and the mixing (by **Sven Faller**) highlights the subtle nuances in Morello's phrasing. The recording quality is consistently transparent and pleasantly present.
- Standards and Brazilian influences complement the guitarist's own compositions harmoniously.
- The liner notes provide helpful background information on the creation of the pieces and additional information on the artistic vision. Thankfully, they also reveal the sophisticated photographs by **Jan Schaffner** on the inside of the CD cover. A reminiscence of the cover of the 1961 LP "Movin' Wes" with **Wes Montgomery**. The cover art was designed by **Maria Schneider**.
- The 12 pieces on the CD are presented exclusively in trio format. On some tracks, additional instruments could have enriched the dynamics for variety's sake.

Personal impression:

I thoroughly enjoyed listening to this CD. The highly acclaimed album "Sambop," released in 2018, was a masterpiece. "Moving" presents itself to the reviewer as a wonderful, direct follow-up CD. Overall, it is a very coherent album that impressively presents high-quality guitar music with Latin American influences. Incidentally, it's also a Christmas gift that you can't go wrong with.