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Michael Echaniz *Seven Shades Of Violet (Rebiralost)*

RIDGEWAY

★★★★★

You don't want to hear what Michael Echaniz has been through: no special pleading here. *Seven Shades Of Violet* would be a great record even if Echaniz had only gone through a bit of writer's block and label indifference, rather than stage four lymphoma, a blood cancer that means business.

Echaniz is fascinated by mathematics and color, the former sometimes as much a turn-off as a medical back story dangled for sympathy. But his interest is profound, and even if titles like "Proxima Centauri" seem to flirt with the slide-rule qualities of '70s prog, the results are quite different. Music of great metrical complexity, yes, but not just as a series of equations, Fibonacci sequences and integrals.

His music has an almost synaesthetic quality, and if you don't believe that exists, try the bluesy (!) title track or "Prince Of Darkness." This is music of profound and highly commu-

nicative feeling. When Echaniz digs into his Basque roots on "Gernika (Bask Balms)" (we're more familiar with the Picasso spelling), it's clear that something profound has been stirred. Just imagine how a man of his heritage might feel after four years of being bombarded more metaphorically with chemo and transplants. There's no "cancer's a battlefield" oversharing, but the analogy between his own experience and that of the raped city is one to pull up the most hardened cynic.

The band name, Rebiralost, needs a gloss. It's an anagram of *bertsolari*, a singer of improvised songs in Basque culture, part of that great oral-formulaic tradition that surrounds the Mediterranean. And, yes, these are songs and the vocalists are absolutely central to the group.

Creative endeavor may well be a kind of remission from the fusillade of confusions the world presents. We wish him well, but no pity points here: This is simply great, challenging music. —Brian Morton

Seven Shades Of Violet (Rebiralost): Prologue; Seven Shades Of Violet; Proxima Centauri; Clockwork (Un carillon à musique); Interlude; Prince Of Darkness; Edulretni; Everything Is Embarrassing; Gernika (Bask Balms); Faintaisie 73; Epilogue. (56:40)
Personnel: Michael Echaniz, keyboards; Erik Jekabson, trumpet; John Gove, trombone; Shay Salhov, alto saxophone; Dan Zinn, tenor saxophone; Jeff Denson, bass, vocals; Dillon Vado, drums, percussion; Silvestre Martinez, percussion; Friction Quartet, strings; Danielle Wertz, Molly Pease, vocals.

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