

## Jazz CD Reviews – mid-May 2015

May 15, 2015

### **The Cunninghams *São Paulo Lights* (NH 8416)**

This fine album brings both sorrow and joy. The sorrow is because this is one of the last recordings made by **Don and Alicia Cunningham** before Alicia's death in December 2014. The joy comes from the music as this exceptional vocal duo joins forces with the



Elvaldo Soares Quartet during a 2012 visit to Brazil. The four instrumentalists, leading lights of the richly varied São Paulo music scene, are pianist Elvaldo Soares, guitarist Cesar Lopes, bassist Lito Robledo, and drummer Douglas Andrade. Experts in Brazil's national music, they are also experienced jazzmen. Among the songs heard here are some from the Latin and the jazz repertoires as well as standards. They include *Anos Dourados*, by Antonio Carlos Jobim-Chico Buarque de Holanda, *Peter & Paul*, Eumir Deodato, *Morning*, Clare Fischer, *Love Vibrations*, Horace Silver, *My Ship*, Kurt Weill-Ira Gershwin, and *More Than You Know*, William Rose-Edward Eliscu-Vincent Youmans. From soulful ballads to breakneck bebop by way of rhythmic Brazilian, the vocal duo is center stage throughout with their contrasting sound and style blending superbly: Alicia's coolly poised, Don's urgently edgy. Adding to the rhythmic drive of the quartet, Don is heard playing conga drums on some tracks, while on the closing track, *São Paulo Lights*, Roberto Sion plays flute and reeds. Lively and hugely entertaining, this is one to savor. The album might take some finding but do try; it is well worth the effort and you will surely agree that the duo had earned the acronym SJVP by which they were known: Super Jazz Vocal Pair.

Bruce Crowther  
"Jazz Mostly"