



Chris DePino DePino plays DECZI

Reviewed by John Mooney

Many of you know Chris DePino from New Haven CT. He and his musical partner, Laco Deczi, have just returned from a tour of Czechoslovakia where they produced a CD "DePino plays Deczi" with Chris playing Deczi's original compositions. They have done a wonderful job with a pleasing mix of styles and moods. Deczi is a trumpet player and the mix of instruments and harmonies is musically quite interesting.

Julia was the first of Deczi's compositions I heard when Chris played it for me last year. I liked it then and more so now that the full arrangement is available. It is a soulful ballad, full of expressive harmonica and trumpet work.

Sunday Morning is jazz played smoothly, featuring Laco's trumpet articulation and Chris's melodic chromatic work backed up by Eric Meridiano, Brian Jenkins, and Tom Chapin on keyboard, bass and drums respectively.

Prshak is the first cut and a good choice. It's lively, up-tempo and features a complex form. Chris's chromatic and Laco's trumpet are presented as two long, independent choruses with strong, vibrant bass and drum backing them up. Deczi was inspired to compose *Prshak* after meeting a beautiful woman with a particularly attractive anatomical feature. You will have to

purchase the album to find out what specifically moved Laco to write this piece, unless you know the Czechoslovakian language.

Sand is a samba with lots of spirit and Latino form where Laco and all his bandmates let loose with Chris's harmonica lines evident throughout the presentation. Mr. Muerkens would be pleased.

JoAngela and *Tinari* feature the guitar work of Joe Tinari and Chris reminding us how beautifully the guitar and harmonica sound together. Both musicians play two melodic Deczi ballads with clarity and feeling.

St. Jude's Children is another piece I loved when I first heard it last year. I even had an opportunity to play it with Chris at a session in Stratford, CT. Deczi wrote this lullaby for the children suffering from leukemia and it is dedicated to the kids at St. Jude's Hospital. This composition can move you.

Carton and *DePino's Blues* are two Deczi compositions that let Chris and Laco do some interesting blues work. The Celula New York Quartet ably backs the fellows on *Carton* and the vocals of Larry Johnson push Chris to some very heavy blues work on *DePino's Blues*. Chris returns to his Blues roots here and really lets loose.

Forest is a moving ballad providing ample opportunity for Deczi and DePino to play with soulful expression. Ably supported by wonderful bass work of the Japanese superstar Nob, with Vaico Deczi on drums and Eric Meridiano on Piano, this piece has an interesting form blending complex lines and harmony into a pleasing experience. Chris saved the best for last!

PLAY LIST:

1.	Prshak	5:57
2.	Julia	4:54
3.	Sunday Morning	6:10
4.	St. Jude's Child	6:02
5.	Carton	5:45
6.	Tinari	4:10
7.	Sand	3:09
8.	JoAngela	5:04
9.	Pino Blues	5:10
10.	Forest	5:58



Musicians:

Chris DePino, Chromatic Harmonica; Laco Deczi, Trumpet; Eric Meridiano, Piano, Keyboards; Nob, Bass Guitar; Vaico Deczi, Drums; Brian Jenkins, Bass Guitar; Tom Chapin, Drums; Larry Johnson, Vocals; Joe Tinari, Guitar

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I direct your attention to CD Baby, a website where you can listen to many 2:00 minute cuts. Here's the link:

www.cdbaby.com/cd/chrisdepino

More about Chris:

Chris began playing diatonic harmonica as a young man, after setting aside his accordion, and several years later added the chromatic harmonica to his musical arsenal. In the late seventies he studied with Robert Bonfiglio, and he was awarded a scholarship to the Turtle Bay School of Music for his performance of the Bach Sonata No. 3 in Eb for Flute and Piano.

He continued his studies to include jazz harmonica, studying with jazz guitarist Tony Lombardozzi. Most recently, Chris has studied with Hendrik Muerkens and Robert Bonfiglio. It was at Robert's "summer camp" during the summer of 2005 where I first met Chris and was the beneficiary of his enthusiasm for the chromatic harmonica and jazz inventions.

Chris has been an active player in the Southern New England area for the last 15 years, working with several bands on a regular basis, and was the featured soloist for two "Concerts in The Park" with the New Haven Symphony Orchestra.

As illustrated on *DePino plays Deczi*, Chris is comfortable with all genres, from classical to jazz to blues.