

JAZZ

AMINA FIGUROVA

Twelve

(In & Out)

★★★★☆



SADLY only three women [Geri Allen, Hiromi and Myra Melford] appear in a leading critics' poll of jazz pianists, and none in the top 10. Yet Amina Figurova of Azerbaijan, who performs with all-round brilliance, certainly belongs there. Based in Holland after successful stints in the US, her all-European sextet was a revelation at Ronnie Scott's during the recent London Jazz Festival and its rhythm section sounds equally impressive on record. So do the frontline soloists. Flautist Bart Platteau, trumpeter Ernie Hammes and saxman Marc Mommaas all swing with panache. Figurova sets the tone with a sophisticated range of tenderness and urgency at the keyboard and each of her compositions and arrangements has an admirable sureness of touch. She's a major artist.

JACK MASSARIK