

Anthony Braxton - Eight (+3) Tristano Compositions For Warne Marsh (1990)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Two Not One*
2. *317 East 32nd Street*
3. *Dreams*
4. *Lennie's Pennies*
5. *How Deep Is the Ocean?*
6. *Victory Ball*
7. *Sax of a Kind*
8. *Lennie-Bird*
9. *Time on My Hands*
10. *Victory Ball [Take 2]*
11. *Baby*
12. *April*

Bass - Cecil McBee

Composed By - Lennie Tristano

Drums - Andrew Cyrille

Piano - Dred Scott

Saxophone [Alto, Sopranino], Flute - Anthony Braxton

Saxophone [Baritone] - John Raskin

This set was recorded as an homage to late saxophone great Warne Marsh (who was alive at the time of this recording) as well as to Lennie Tristano and his band of the late '40s and early '50s, which also included alto saxophonist Lee Konitz and guitarist Billy Bauer. Braxton's own band mirrors Tristano's, with Jon Raskin on baritone saxophone, Dred Scott on piano, Cecil McBee on bass, and Andrew Cyrille on drums. The first four tracks are all Tristano's. His songbook -- which incorporated Charlie Parker's sense of harmony and his own sense of lyrical melody and counterpoint -- is executed flawlessly by this band, with a different sense of clarity and emotional intensity that only history can bring to bear. Interestingly, it's on "Lennie's

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Pennies" that Braxton and Raskin really dig in to the melodic invention that is so subtle in the original from 1952. They look from the downside up in the way they play through the front line and then take out the harmony and turn it inside out. On Irving Berlin's "How Deep Is the Ocean," a favorite of Marsh's, they turn a lilting lyrical line into a force for beauty and complexity. On Marsh's own "Sax of a Kind," Braxton's most emotional playing ever comes to the fore. He doesn't sweat the technique, he's already got that. He's interested in Marsh's feeling that came across when he heard the tune and the feeling Marsh got out of his horn, and, of course, he's grateful for that influence. Braxton sails with no edges, slowly allowing the tune to build from his soprano and inverting the tune's mode just as the line slips into improvisation. It's a ballad without a backbone, just a feeling, spreading over the entire body of the track until all that's left are the mode changes in the solos -- truly beautiful. Braxton has done numerous recordings of standards, and even a double disc (on this same label) of his readings of Charlie Parker. But as fine as most of those recordings are, none of them match the lyrical brilliance and subtle grace of this tribute. ---Thom Jurek, Rovi

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