

Pat Metheny & Ornette Coleman - Song X (2005)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Police People* (4:57)
2. *All of Us* (0:15)
3. *Good Life* (3:25)
4. *Word from Bird* (3:48) [play](#)
5. *Compute* (2:03)
6. *Veil* (3:42)
7. *Song X* (5:34) [play](#)
8. *Mob Job* (4:11)
9. *Endangered Species* (13:18)
10. *Video Games* (5:20)
11. *Kathelin Gray* (4:13)
12. *Trigonometry* (5:05)
13. *Song X Duo* (3:07)
14. *Long Time No See* (7:38)

Musicians:

Pat Metheny - guitar, guitar synth

Ornette Coleman - alto saxophone, violin

Charlie Haden - bass

Jack DeJohnette - drums

Denardo Coleman - drums, percussion

The untrammelled pleasure Pat Metheny has given this listener over the last couple of months with the freewheeling trio album *Day Trip* (Nonesuch Records, 2008) has prompted a trawl through the guitarist's back catalogue in search of another solid gold fix. It's been a lot of fun—with the highlights including two other trio sets, *Trio 99-00* (Warner Bros, 1999) and *Rejoicing* (ECM, 1985), a patchy but compelling early collaboration with bassist Charlie Haden and drummer Jack DeJohnette, *80/81* (ECM, 1980), and the Pat Metheny Group's atmospheric

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live double *Travels* (ECM, 1982), long overdue for a lifetime achievement award as an "acceptable face of fusion."

But the 24-carat muthalode, the ripe mango in the creme brulee, has proved to be *Song X: Twentieth Anniversary* (Nonesuch Records, 2005), an expanded and remixed edition of Metheny's 1985 disc with saxophonist Ornette Coleman, also featuring Haden and DeJohnette and second drummer Denardo Coleman. For it will still scare the shivers out of you, still take you on a ride to beyond...it hasn't lost one iota of its power or beauty in the 23 years since it was recorded.

Song X was a jaw droppingly audacious project for Metheny to undertake, especially so as it was his debut album for the Warner group after some 10 years with ECM. On the face of it, Metheny and Coleman were light years apart; a lyrical, changes-based guitarist with a parallel (and to many listeners, worrying) fascination with fusion, and an uncompromising free jazz iconoclast 24 years his senior. Would the two make beautiful music together? In the weeks and months prior to the album's release, the jazz jury was out.

But the album revealed hitherto hidden depths in Metheny, as he tore through a 48-minute set of Coleman tunes and co-compositions with a vigor and inventive genius each shoulder to shoulder with the saxophonist. The 13-minute thrash-with-brains "Endangered Species" is still a body punch of Mike Tyson proportions, but one that leaves you elated as well as wrung out. Metheny and Coleman both are just burning. Nothing in Metheny's previous recorded work had suggested he was capable of degrees of abandon and ferocity like this. "Song X" is almost as titanic. At other times, as on "Kathelin Gray" and "Trigonometry," there is fragility and exquisite delicacy.

The 20th Anniversary edition includes 6 new tracks, excluded from the original LP as they would have bust that format's maximum playing time. They are, astonishingly and wonderfully, as strong as the previously released tracks, and as if to emphasise that, Metheny programmed them to start the 20th Anniversary edition. (The original album begins with track 7, "Song X.") Intriguingly and rewardingly, two tunes, "Police People" and "The Good Life," have changes, written by Metheny, serving as bases for improvisation. Coleman negotiates these, for him, unfamiliar parameters with aplomb, his lines following their own intuitive logic without any apparent restraint. The sound on the 20th Anniversary edition is richer and has more presence—but, to these ears, Metheny is still too low in the mix. Coleman's piercing tone commands the ear in the many dual improvisations on the album, and you often have consciously to tune Coleman out in order to hear the detail of what Metheny's doing. That's the only quibble, and maybe it can be addressed on a future edition—for certainly, *Song X* will be

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working its mojo for many years yet.

W 2005 roku mija dwadzieścia lat od premiery płyty Song X Pata Metheny i Ornette Colemana. Z tej okazji firma Nonesuch przygotowała specjalną reedycję tego historycznego już albumu. Znajdziemy tutaj zarówno osiem kompozycji autorstwa Matheny i Colemana, które ukazały się na pierwotnej wersji Song X, jak i sześć wcześniej niepublikowanych nagrań pochodzących z tej samej sesji nagraniowej. Wśród specjalnych gości pojawiają się tacy muzycy jak basista basista Charlie Haden, perkusista Jack DeJohnette, czy Denardo Colemana, syna Ornette'a. Całość, mimo upływu lat, brzmi niezwykle świeżo i nie utraciła ani kropli swojej muzycznej intensywności. Nowa wersja płyty została wyprodukowana przez samego Pata Metheny'ego w ramach zapowiadanych przez Nonesuch reedycji wszystkich najśłynniejszych albumów tego muzyka.

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