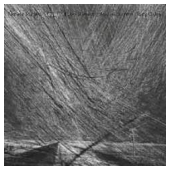
Tomasz Stanko – Leosia (1997)



1 Morning Heavy Song
2 Die Weisheit von Le comte Lautréamont
3 A Farewell To Maria
4 Brace
5 Trinity
6 Forlorn Walk
7 Hungry Howl
8 No Bass Trio
9 Euforila
10 Leosia

Double-bass - Anders Jormin
Drums - Tony Oxley
Piano - Bobo Stenson
Trumpet - Tomasz Stanko

As ECM recordings go, Leosia is one of the label's, and certainly trumpeter Tomasz Stanko's, definitive introspective and sedate musical statements. Not that in either instance these qualities have been in short supply, but here those themes of lush romanticism, thinly veiled mysticism, and pure ethereal thought could not be more concentrated or emphasized. As sparse a brass player as there is in contemporary improvised music, Stanko takes it even further with hushed tones and thoughtful, fully formed melodies, reinforced by the always lovely piano playing of Bobo Stenson, able bassist Anders Jormin, and the reined-in drumming of the usually energetic Tony Oxley. The CD is bookended by the entire group performing together, but in the middle, duets and trios provide the center section of their boldly extraterrestrial improvisations. In the full quartet setting, the self-explanatory "Morning Heavy Song" sets a sad, funeral tone, followed by the duality of time faster than the melody lines in "Die Weisheit Von Le Comte Lautreamont" and "A Farewell to Maria" in a free-floating final parting. Five smaller groupings feature Oxley's

tiny cymbal and percussive flickings with Jormin's bowed bass on "Brace," and "Trinity" with Stenson added, while Stanko swings "Forlorn Walk" in a free bop mode alongside Jormin and Oxley, but "Hungry Howl" and "No Bass Trio" continue the reflective sounds. The conclusionary "Euforila" and the title selection exude hope at the outset, but a somber mood returns, although Stanko's bolder trumpet asks more loudly for attention, and Stenson's piano rambles a bit in non-plussed disbelief. Clearly a project moved by the death of a friend, it is a reminder of how life is fleeting, and words unspoken ---Michael G. Nastos, allmusic.com

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