Morten Schantz Trio – Conveyance (2012)

01. Black Sea 06:52 02. Too Marvelous For Words 06:01 03. Love Is Blindness 05:07 04. Grace 05:48 05. Conveyance 06:35 06. Book Of Recurring Dreams 05:42 07. Bemsha Swing 03:56 play 08. Downside-Up 05:48 09. Ten Indian Commandments 04:21 play
Musicians: Morten Schantz – piano Morten Ankarfeldt – bass Janus Templeton – drums

Pianist Morten Schantz proves his chops with Conveyance, a varied and compelling recording.

The Copenhagen-based musician, in his debut release as the leader of a trio, plays with a sensitivity and awareness rarely heard. Absent are the gratuitous trimmings and cumbersome blotches of experimentation, thank heavens. In place of pompousness is devotion to the song and, on a larger scale, to the trio itself.

Conveyance is an exciting album because it doesn't have a blind spot where pop and rock music is concerned. Schantz and his trio don't cut corners, either, and their sonic appreciation for various genres comes in handy when expressing this larger vision.

Upon reading the track listing, Schantz's take on U2's "Love is Blindness" struck me as an instant "must hear this." And indeed, the arrangement of the Achtung Baby closing track is something richly rewarding, hazarding a tad from the original with some fresh chord progressions and a solo bit that somewhat darkens the mood.

Elsewhere, Schantz takes on Peter Gabriel's "Downside-Up." The arrangement is understated,

charming and perfect for the trio, with Ankarfeldt's handsome, oaky bass slickly walking the line.

Also of the rock variety is Jeff Buckley's "Grace." Remodelling a classic is always a risk, no matter the genre. Here Schantz builds on prior experiences and makes it hip, practicing the fine art of addition by subtraction to strip it down to an honestly cool step. It still collects the many flashes of Buckley loveliness, but Schantz has grounded things a little. It works well here in the trio setting.

There are a few Schantz originals on Conveyance, too. "Black Sea" kicks off the record with a lovely flow built on solid chord progressions and a mysterious air. And the title track is a challenging piece that plays with tempo and momentum pleasingly, building to a stunning blaze of vigour and bravura from the pianist.

Schantz, also widely known for his work with JazzKamikaze, is a persistent, sprightly pianist. His arrangements reveal his love for the craft and his ability to take on prevailing tones in order to make them his own is distinctive. Conveyance is a record of risk and, luckily, high reward.---Jordan Richardson, blogcritics.org

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