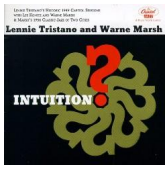
Lennie Tristano and Warne Marsh - Intuition (1956)



1. Smog Eyes 2. Ear Conditioning 3. Lover Man 4. Quintessence 5. Jazz of Two Cities 6. Dixies Dilemma 7. Tschaikovsky's 0pus No.42 Third movement 8. I Never Knew 9. Ear Conditioning (mono take) 10.Lover Man (mono take) 11.Jazz of Two Cities (mono take) 12.I Never Knew (mono take) 13.Wow 14.Cross Current 15.Yesterdays 16.Marionette 17.Sax of a Kind 18.Intuition 19.Digression Ronnie Ball Piano Billy Bauer Guitar Denzil Best Drums Ted Brown Sax (Tenor) Arnold Fishkind Bass Harold Granowsky Drums Lee Konitz Sax (Alto) Warne Marsh Sax (Tenor) Jeff Morton Drums Lennie Tristano Piano George Tucker Bass

The Warne Marsh album that begins this CD was issued in mono as "Jazz Of Two Cities" (Imperial LP 9027) and in stereo as "Winds Of Marsh" (Imperial LP 12013). The mono and stereo takes of "Jazz Of Two Cities" and "I Never Knew" are completely different. The second saxophone solo on "Ear Conditioning" and the piano solo on "Lover Man" differ on the stereo and mono masters. Both versions of these four tunes are therefore included here.

Tracks 1 to 4, 9 & 10 recorded on October 3, 1956 at Radio Recorders in Los Angeles. Tracks 5 to 8, 11 & 12 recorded on October 11, 1956 at Radio Recorders in Los Angeles. Tracks 13 & 14 recorded on March 4, 1949 in New York. Tracks 15 recorded on March 14, 1949 in New York. Tracks 16 to 19 recorded on May 16, 1949 in New York.

This CD brings back a formerly rare set by Warne Marsh, plus seven classic performances that serve as the high point of Lennie Tristano's career. Oddly enough, the Tristano date is programmed second. First is a full-length album which matches Warne Marsh with the cooler but complementary tone of fellow tenor Ted Brown (plus pianist Ronnie Ball, bassist George Tucker, and drummer Jeff Morton). The original eight selections are joined by four alternate takes recorded in mono. Marsh and Brown blend together well, Ball has several creative solos,

and most of the "originals" are based closely on familiar standards. However, the main reason to acquire this CD is for the seven remarkable Tristano tracks which feature his finest group (consisting of the pianist/leader, altoist Lee Konitz, Marsh on tenor, guitarist Billy Bauer, bassist Arnold Fishkin, and either Harold Granowsky or Denzil Best on drums). Tristano's music was unique and even more advanced than most bop of the late '40s. While he confined the rhythm section to very quiet timekeeping, the vibrato-less horns and Tristano himself played very long melodic lines, constantly improvising. The stunning unisons performed by Konitz and Marsh (particularly on "Wow") still sound remarkable today, as does the interplay of the two horns on "Sax of a Kind." "Intuition" and "Digression" were the first recorded free improvisations in jazz, but are quite coherent due to the musicians' familiarity with each other. Due to the Lennie Tristano performances, this CD reissue (which has over 75 minutes of music) is essential for all jazz collections. ---Scott Yanow, AllMusic Review

Chicago-born pianist Lennie Tristano remains one of jazz's most criminally unsung pioneers. First making a name for himself in the jazz world of the mid-1940s, Tristano pushed the boundaries of the music with his advanced use of harmonics, polytonal effects, and counterpoint. His work helped bridge the gap between swinging bop and 20th-century art music. With his greatest band, which featured Tristano protégé Warne Marsh on tenor sax, he also recorded the earliest known examples of free jazz, cutting two tracks of fully improvised, free-form music a good 10 years before Ornette Coleman did the same and became famous for it. The 1996 compilation CD Intuition collects together a clutch of Tristano's greatest performances, including his two seminal free-jazz recordings, making it an ideal place to sample the pianist's rare and beautiful gifts.

Tristano and his band treated bop with a rare sensitivity and sophistication. "Wow" provides an excellent example of the band's prowess, with Tristano's layered, shaded chords set against a typically intoxicating solo from Marsh and delicate, absorbing fretwork from guitarist Billy Bauer. The title track comes near the end of the disc and is the first of Tristano's two free-jazz experiments (along with the similarly well-titled "Digression"). Here the band is let loose, free of rhythmic, tonal, or melodic constraints. Of course these musicians knew each other well, and the piece comes off as wonderfully unified in spite of its open form. It's like dipping into a jazz wonderland where everything goes topsy-turvy but somehow still makes perfect sense.

The CD also features a rare set from one of Marsh's own bands, without Tristano, recorded in 1956. "Smog Eyes" starts off the selection with Marsh leading his band through a bright, ambling melody. This is smart, lovely jazz, the kind that lights up a room in golden hues with its fine musicality and good-natured swing. And if the Marsh cuts on Intuition aren't quite as groundbreaking and effortless as Tristano's efforts, they still provide a worthy accompaniment, making this reissue a perfect double bill of classic, underheard jazz. ---Madisyn Taylor, dailyom.com

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