

## Avishai Cohen – Seven Seas (2011)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Dreaming* 2. *About a Tree* 3. *Seven Seas* 4. *Halach* 5. *Stav* [play](#) 6. *Ani Aff* 7. *Worksong* [play](#)

8. *Hayo Hayta* 9. *Two Roses* 10. *Tres Hermanic Eran*

Personnel: Avishai Cohen: vocals, acoustic and electric bass; Malka: vocals; Shai Maestro: piano, keyboards; Itamar Douari: percussion

Over the past few years, bassist Avishai Cohen has become recognized as one of the most creative musicians of current times. A fertile composer of the highest rank, he has, among other things, enriched and expanded the genre he works in: a master of the upright bass, an improviser of not-so-often-seen genius, and a bandleader with a rich and kaleidoscopic history.

Seven Seas is another exceptional chapter in the Cohen catalog, one that showcases a willingness to stretch itself to the breaking point and open up the music to a wider array of approaches. It is one of his most spontaneous recordings, with both disciplinarian and freewheeling sense of adventurous interaction. In general, there is a spirit of true exploration on his records which is also evident here, with adventurous improvisation added to that blend of Mediterranean melodies (with touches of Ladino/Judeo-Spanish heritage) and the art of jazz. As always, he successfully blends, extracts, adapts, and layers one set of music onto another, through a personal approach to music making. In the constant sonic middle ground, there are the sounds of piano, bass and percussion, and the occasional oud and brass ensemble, that merge the melody and rhythm brilliantly.

Dreaming is an inspired opener, with playful harmonies, wordless vocals, irregular phrase lengths and the sort of lyricism and playfulness that has long been a hallmark of his trio with drummer Mark Guiliana. The magic of this band shines on the title track, where Shai Maestro's piano acts as a gorgeous signpost to which virtually all of these musicians can return. His

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melodic sensibility and crisp tone are beacons in the often swirling, escalating and cascading whorls of melodies and interchanges. The longer this album plays, though, the more this music flourishes on its own. At moments it is beautiful beyond description.

Empathetic communication is the key to jazz of the highest order, and that kind of communication is evident from start to finish, regardless of the compositions' dynamics. The way this band shifts seamlessly from one style to another pays substantial creative dividends. "Ani Aff" features the Latino rhythms and melodies for which Cohen is well-known, and that type of playfulness and interchange simply shines on "Two Roses," embellished by Itamar Douari's percussion work. But that kind of interplay is also evident on quieter tracks such as "Staaav," which unfolds slowly, with beautiful piano melodies augmented by Cohen and Douari, who add subtle touches here and there, as well as "Hayo Hayta" and the closing "Tres Hermanicas Eran," a traditional Ladino song, beautifully sung by Cohen.

Seven Seas is a remarkable album; most impressive is Cohen's clarity of vision, which is what separates the boys from men. Cohen knows what he wants and, even better, he knows how to achieve it. The album's immediate attraction is its loose, fresh informality, a spontaneous and sparkling liveliness. The result of this unlikely union is one of the most seamlessly beautiful works Cohen has ever produced. ---Nenad Georgievski, [allaboutjazz.com](http://allaboutjazz.com)

Avishai Cohen. Jego muzyka dostarcza mnóstwa emocji. Złożoność poszczególnych fragmentów, ich wręcz intymna konstrukcja, jednocześnie jest bardzo zaskakująca i zmieniając się w najmniej spodziewanych momentach. Nowy album Seven Seas to nowy szczyt w karierze artysty. Bez wahania można powiedzieć, że to dojrzałe dzieło. To album fusion, przenoszący nas bliżej rzeczywistości odysei, swoim tytułem i brzmieniem przywołując na myśl morskie legendy. Z pewnością to najbardziej ekscytujący album z dotychczasowej dyskografii artysty. ---  
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