

Gary Burton Quintet - Dreams So Real (1975)

Written by bluesever

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01. *Dreams So Real* 02. *Ictus - Syndrome - Wrong Key Donkey* 03. *Jesus Maria* 04. *Vox Humana* 05. *Doctor* 06. *Intermission Music* Gary Burton - Vibraphone Mick Goodrick - Guitar Pat Metheny - Guitar, Guitar (12 String), Guitar (12 String Electric) Bob Moses - Drums Steve Swallow – Bass

Performing the intricate music of Carla Bley is no mean feat, but if anyone is up for the challenge, it would be vibraphonist Gary Burton. Signifying a high watermark in his career in the mid-'70s, *Dreams So Real* teams Burton with his fellow professor at the Berklee College of Music Mick Goodrick, along with recently graduated student Pat Metheny. Add the peerless electric bass guitarist Steve Swallow and always proficient drummer Bob Moses, and you have the makings of a short-lived supergroup capable of playing Bley's memorable, melancholy music. While generally regarded as one of many Burton/Metheny pairings, it is Goodrick's individualism (it was he who primarily tutored Metheny) that needs more recognition. With Goodrick on electric six-string and Metheny on electric 12-string guitar, the sonorities they establish allow Burton to freely discourse on Bley's prickly angular melodies. The brittle and fractured combo track "Ictus/Syndrome" -- closer to a three-piece suite -- goes from a frantic neo-bop meter to straight-ahead swing with a clearly inspired Burton rambling into the bright signature rondo sound that Metheny and Swallow have always owned. "Syndrome" might also be familiar to Bley's fans as "Wrong Key Donkey." "Doctor" merges the vibes and guitars into a guided prognosis of hypertension within slowly elevated blood pressure levels. "Intermission Music," inspired by golden age films, is a beautiful waltz vehicle for the guitars rhythmically, and for Swallow and Moses melodically. With the bandmembers at their most passionate, the title track is a lighthearted but cerebral ballad, "Vox Humana" a simplified tango, while "Jesus Maria" evokes the delicate epic strains of Bley's personalized sound with Burton playing it alone. While the singing sound of Metheny is in its infant stages, it is easily recognizable and clearly realized. Generally regarded as one of Burton's top three recorded dates, it has stood the test of time. Perhaps some day, a complete collection of the vibist playing Carla Bley's many other compositions can be compiled to complement this surface-scratching but very important album.

---Michael G. Nastos, Rovi

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