

## Jan Garbarek – It's Ok To Listen To The Gray (1985)

Written by bluesever

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1. *White Noise of Forgetfulness* 2. *Crossing Place, The* 3. *One Day in March I Go Down to the Sea and Listen* 4. *Mission: To Be Where I Am* 5. *It's OK to Phone the Island That Is a Mirage* 6. *It's OK to Listen to the Gray Voice* 7. *I'm the Knife-Thrower's Partner* Jan Garbarek - Sax (Soprano), Sax (Tenor) Michael DiPasqua - Drums, Percussion David Torn - DX-7, Guitar, Synthesizer Eberhard Weber - Bass

Here Garbarek is approaching the extremes of his style, appearing once again with the Jan Garbarek Group. He has his usual stark, meditative pieces, interspersed with some cutting-edge work, occasionally spinning just enough out of control to be exciting. And in other places he ventures headlong into the syrupy fields of Kenny G.-land. All pieces on this record are titled after quotes from poems by Tomas Tranströmer, and though the actual connection to these poems remains tenuous at best, they do add a provocative element to the pieces themselves, which beg for at least some programmatic interpretation. Excellent bass work by Eberhard Weber, particularly on the more avant-garde pieces (e.g., "The Crossing Place" and "One Day in March I Go Down to the Sea and Listen"). Multi-instrumentalist David Torn is primarily responsible for the more aggressive edge this record takes. His guitar lines explode with energy and tension, giving Garbarek a more off-center field to play in -- and considering his penchant for excessive restraint, this is a welcome environment to hear him in. The title track features Garbarek squealing high on his soprano sax over a bed of spooky chord changes. Low points on this record find the group entering soft rock territory; the most offensive here is "Mission: To Be Where I Am" -- and at over eight minutes, it's a significant valley. But all in all, the strong work finds Garbarek doing stronger work than he had done for some time and certainly stronger than listeners would hear from him for many years to come. ---Mark Allender, Rovi

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