Anna Maria Jopek & Pat Metheny – Upojenie (2002)

1 - Cichy zapada zmrok (3:24) 2 - Przyplyw, odplyw, oddech czas (4:46) 3 - Tam, gdzie nie siega wzrok (3:48) 4 - Biel (3:20) 5 - Czarne slowa (5:09) 6 - Letter From Home (2:46) 7 - Are You Going With Me (8:35) 8 - Zupelnie inna ja (3:52) 9 - Mania Mienia (3:38) 10 - By on byl tu (6:53) 11 - Upojenie (4:43) 12 - Piosenka dla Stasia (3:46) 13 - Me jedyne Niebo (3:14) 14 - Polskie drogi (2:23) 15 - Droga na Poludnie [BONUS] (3:31) 16 – Na calej polaci snieg 17 – Szepty i lzy 18 – Lulajze Jezuniu Personnel Anna Maria Jopek - vocals, electric piano Pat Metheny - guitars, guitar synthesizer, 42-string guitar, synthesizers Leszek Możdżer - piano Pawel Bzim Zarecki - synthesizers, organ, percussion Mateusz Pospieszalski - synthesizer Darek Oleszkiewicz - acoustic bass Marcin Pospieszalski - electric bass Cezary Konrad - drums Mino Cinelu - percussion Wojciech Kowalewski - percussion Henryk Miśkiewicz - soprano saxophone Piotr Nazaruk - flute, recorder, percussion, hammered dulcimer, banjo, vocals Bernard Maseli - vibraphone Marek Napiorkowski - guitar Barney - alien voices Orchestra conducted by Mateusz Pospieszalski

Originally released in 2002 in Europe and Japan, Upojenie (Ecstasy) is a collaboration between Pat Metheny and superstar Polish vocalist Anna Maria Jopek. It came into being after Jopek approached the guitarist at a jazz festival in Warsaw in 2001. Her original idea was to perform some of her own work, some of Metheny's, and some Polish folk songs (exactly what happened). The collaboration was recorded over four months in Poland; it is something wholly other than the sum of its parts might suggest. Co-produced by composer Marcin Kydrynski (Jopek's husband) and Metheny, with Jopek and Pawel Bzim Zarecki, this set marries together the guitarist's signature meld of jazz, pop, and American forms with electronics, early folk melodies, classical melodies, and arrangements with exotic instrumentation and Jopek's otherworldly but gentle voice. For Metheny fans, this is a unique opportunity on two fronts: to hear new versions of his own tunes with different arrangements, titles, and lyrics, as well as the opportunity to be introduced to an immense talent. Now that the set has been released stateside, it becomes an opportunity for fans of contemporary jazz and sophisticated adult pop as well. The set commences with the duet "Cicy Zapada Zmrok" (Here Comes the Silent Dusk), a traditional evening prayer sung by Jopek with Metheny on the 42-string Pikasso guitar. It's skeletal, ethereal, and haunting, yet in Metheny's hands, the melody transcends its origin and

becomes a song that could have been sung on the North American plains as well as in Eastern Europe. Another duet, "Biel" (Whiteness), written by Kydrynski, features the singer buoyed by Metheny's classical and baritone guitars. It feels spacious enough to have been recorded in a church, but its roots are in samba.

These tracks are the anomalies on the album, however. More often Metheny and Jopek are accompanied by a full band mainly comprised of crack Polish session players, including the great pianist Leszek Mozdzer. Check the version of Metheny's "High Tide, Love Tide, the Breath of Time...," titled "Przyplyw, Odplyw, Oddech Czasu..." (Tell Her You Saw Me) here, with lyrics by Magda Czapinska. The nearly whispered, restrained multi-tracked vocals, a soprano guitar, and lithe basslines, acoustic piano, loops, timpani, and percussion create a web of gossamer and ether before the tempo changes and all sounds seem to bleed into one warm blanket of sound with the considerable emotions in this music all on display. "Are You Going with Me," the original single from this set, is an instrumental with wordless vocals that evolves from the arrangement found on Offramp into something far more folkish and mysterious. Jopek's own "Czarne Slowa" (Black Words) is a deeply sad, piano-driven love song, a ballad with somber overtones hinting at an intricate folk-jazz hymn. The nostalgic "By On Byl Tu" ("Let It Stay" from the Pat Metheny Group's Travels) becomes a hymn of longing and homecoming with the guitarist's classical guitar kissed by Mozdzer's piano, upright bass, and drums. But in Jopek's round, warm, seemingly ageless vocal, this song is almost a lullaby, with gorgeous interplay between the instruments. The domestic issue of this set contains two bonus cuts including a live number. Metheny fans who couldn't afford the import should jump on this, and those who have an interest in sophisticated pop singers from Stacey Kent to Inara George should consider this as well. Upojenie is international jazz as poetry in motion. ---Thom Jurek, Rovi

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back