

Jan Garbarek – In Praise Of Dreams (2004)



1. *As Seen From Above* 2. *In Praise of Dreams* 3. *One Goes There Alone* 4. *Knot of Place and Time* 5. *If You Go Far Enough* 6. *Scene From Afar* 7. *Cloud of Unknowing* 8. *Without Visible Sign* 9. *Iceburn* 10. *Conversation With a Stone* 11. *A Tale Begun* Jan Garbarek - Soprano Saxophone, Tenor Saxophone, Synthesizers Manu Katché - Drums, Percussion, Samples Kim Kashkashian - Viola (2-4, 6-10)

It has been six years since saxophonist/composer Jan Garbarek issued a new recording under his own name. For *In Praise of Dreams* Garbarek enlisted violist Kim Kashkashian and frequent collaborator Manu Katché on drums. Garbarek, who composed the album's 11 selections, plays saxophones as well as a host of keyboards and percussion, while Katché plays acoustic and electronic drums along with Kashkashian's viola. In many ways this is the most radical recording that Garbarek has ever issued, but not because it's outside -- quite the opposite. This is easily the warmest, most accessible outing Garbarek has ever issued because though there are no vocals, Garbarek has clearly written "songs" on this set, with identifiable structures that are followed almost throughout. Though he is no stranger to the form, having employed it almost continually for the last 20 years, he has never engaged it so thoroughly and completely. Previously, he has engaged improvisation to get song to the breaking point and move it somewhere else. Here it is always present; surprise happens inside the formal frameworks of these compositions. Beautiful, soulful lines underscore and recontextualize the saxophonist's trademark Nordic iciness of tone on the opener, "As Seen from Above," with its spiraling soprano, lush keyboards, and hypnotic loops. In its warmth, it comes very close to a distinctly European kind of groove/soul-jazz. The interplay between Kashkashian and Garbarek on the title track offers rounded, multidimensional sonorities winding through the intro before spilling into a call-and-response melody. The repetitive keyboard line and Katché's mantra-like drumming under the loops draw the listener inside the song's heart and extend the edge for the front line. The restrained romanticism shown by Kashkashian on her nocturnal solo intro to "One Goes There Alone" is nearly breathtaking. As it gives way to the tune itself, it's slow, reflective, and rooted deeply in the tension created between percussion and Garbarek's minimal backing response lines. When he solos later in the tune, he's clearly blowing blues into her elegiac line. The blues notion continues in his phrasing on "Knot of Place and Time," slipping

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through the landscape of Kashkashian's elegant, near heartbreakingly poetic soundscape. And so it goes. Things get more speculative on "Scene from Afar" and "Cloud of Unknowing," but it hardly matters since these song forms are nonetheless immediately recognizable, presenting the nether side of the equation. It emerges again with "Conversation With a Stone" and whispers to a close with "A Tale Begun," a mantra-like duet that closes this strong set that will undoubtedly, if it gets the opportunity to be heard, garner Jan Garbarek some new fans. Poetic, moving, and marvelous, In Praise of Dreams is a welcome return. ---Thom Jurek, Rovi

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