



John Bruschini  
As You Were  
Cathexis Records  
2000 Time: 59  
Reviewed by Don Williamson

Musicians: John Bruschini (guitars), Robert Aries (keyboards), Jim Nolet (viola), Kip Reed, Boris Kozlov\* (electric bass), Jeff Hirshfield, Jay Rosen\* (drums)

Songs: As You Were, B4, Way Down, Bloodroot, Glory, April, Funkyard, Ancestral Seeds, Sarah's\*

#### Rating:

Performing with the likes of Cecil Taylor, Dave Douglas and Myra Melford, guitarist John Bruschini may be a known quantity in the New York City environs. However, to the west of the Hudson River, Bruschini's name recognition fades.

Perhaps As You Were will rectify the low recognition factor of a fine guitarist who performs in a variety of styles while pursuing his own muse.

All of the tunes on the CD are Bruschini's, and they display a wellspring of complex thought and emotions, not to mention references to a number of traditional and not-so-traditional jazz styles. The title track creates a soundscape of rich colors and unforced, yet technically challenging, improvisation over a repeated motif. Bruschini exchanges lines with Jim Nolet on viola for a tasteful and evocative development of a flowing, unpredictable theme. In a Metheny-like combination of memorable lines with unconventional changes, the tune "April" proceeds in the same attitude of ease and harmonic surprise but more melodically.

If the listener starts to think that Bruschini confines his style to comforting musical descriptions of deeply felt connections to his friends and his surroundings, "Funkyard" proves that he can play in a organ-derived groove, his electric guitar recalling in-vogue jazz jam

groups. Then "Ancestral Seeds," with its Deep South allusions, swells with slow blues angst.

Emerging from the status of sideman to leader of his own group, John Bruschini has engaged a group of musicians who understand his vision and his style, Reed and Hirshfield in particular driving the tunes with understated energy. With technical precision and an instinctive feel for the music, Bruschini has produced a recording that captures his own distinctive approach while introducing him to a larger audience.

