

REVIEW FROM JOHN MCLAUGHLIN ARCHIVES WEBSITE

<http://www.angelfire.com/jazz/jmweb/>

As You Were
John Bruschini

OK, cross John McLaughlin jazz sense with Stevie Ray Vaughn blues power, then add a touch of Carlos Santana's feeling for balladic melody, throw in Holdsworth's angularity and forward steps John Bruschini. That's probably enough of a recommendation for most people, but good things are worth savoring, so let's dwell a little while longer.

Bruschini's appeal is due, in part, to his long tenure with Cecil Taylor, and with many of Mr. Taylor's various touring ensembles. Bruschini was featured on the Japanese TV broadcast of "Live at the Knitting Factory" with Cecil Taylor's group, RADA. Bruschini has also performed, recorded and/or toured with Craig Harris, Dave Douglas, Mose Allison, Denis Charles, Carlos Ward, Charles Persip, Makanda Ken McIntyre, Akira Tana, Butch Morris, Sonny Simmons, Myra Melford, Cyro Baptista, David S. Ware, Dave Kikoski, Wilber Morris, Dennis Irwin, Warren Smith, Jon King, Antoine Roney, Jeff Williams, Guillermo Franco and Gerry Brown.
(www.johnbruschini.com)

Cecil Taylor's name stands out there as probably the most familiar, but the list hides a host of associations with other greats (Sun Ra, Joe Farrell, Billy Cobham, Kenny Burrell, Wynton Kelly, Cecil McBee, Paul Haines, Zoot Sims, Woody Shaw, etc., etc., etc.) In the close-knit circle of the jazz world, you're never far away from a legend.

What this musical promiscuity leads to is a formidable network of sidemen honing their chops, trying to be heard above the next guy, and the musicians here have got to be amongst the best. Robert Aries [keyboards] (John Scofield, Bill Evans [sax]), Jeff Hirshfield [drums] (Dr. John, John Zorn, Randy Brecker, Kenny Wheeler, Paul Bley), Jim Nolet [viola] (Cecil Taylor, Don Cherry), Kip Reed [bass] (Gil Evans, Tania Maria) are all exceptional, providing the perfect arena for Bruschini to show us his versatility-for it is his album, but not at the cost of what at times seems almost telepathic group play.

Track highlights include the Mahavishnu-like B4 with excellent union phrasing between guitar and Nolet's viola, superb Larry Young-type Hammond organ from Aries (for a comparison take a listen to The Art of Larry Young) on Bloodroot and the incredible syncopation of Funkyard, a 4-based rhythm with Bruschini laying back to exaggerate the swing.

The fact that this album comes out of a jazz scene from the recently blighted New York City [review written 20/09/2001] may add a touch of pathos for the listener-the album's closing track, Sarah's, could have been written as a beautiful epitaph. ...being as it is the closest I've ever heard to a JM recording without JM himself playing, As You Were immediately qualifies as a must have.

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