

Cadence

THE REVIEW OF JAZZ & BLUES: CREATIVE IMPROVISED MUSIC

Vol. 24 No. 6

June 1998

\$3.00

ANTON SCHWARTZ, WHEN MUSIC CALLS,

ANTONJAZZ 1001.

Too Much Pepper / Rabbit Days / Where Or When* / Tidepool* / Through The Years / Poketown / Denouement / Paradoxy* / Sticktuitive / When Music Calls. 61:31.

Schwartz, ts; Paul Nagel, p; John Shifflett, b; Jason Lewis, d; Josh Jones, conga*. 11/4-5/97, Berkeley, CA.

Debut albums sometimes lack spontaneity, as if the musicians wanted things a little circumscribed to help push airplay. That's not the case with *When Music Calls*, where everybody stretches to often memorable effect. Schwartz studied a bit with both Warne Marsh and Eddie Daniels — imagine what that experience would do for you — and held the first tenor sax chair, after Don Braden and before Joshua Redman, in the Harvard University Jazz Band. I hear occasional, subtle hints of Marsh's quirky approach to phrasing in him, but mostly I get Dexter Gordon. Schwartz has an interesting sensibility, a mixture of Coltrane, Ben Webster, and Stanley Turrentine, his admitted influences. Where I hook Dexter into this chain is in the way he sits on certain notes, and where the chain holds is in how much Schwartz holds back. You'll have to look hard for chops-heavy blather on this disc; the maturity of approach here sounds like somebody on his third or fourth record, not his first. Paul Nagel, who has a quietly striking sense of space, contributes heavily to Schwartz's approach. He's got a neat solo on "Tidepool" that recalls the graceful

simplicity of Joe Sample, and an even better one on "Sticktuitive," whose melody grabs the first couple of notes from Shorter's "Footprints." Shifflett is one of the most impressive bassists I've heard recently, and his deep, woody tone — think Sirone playing straight-ahead — is captured well in HDCD sound. I'm a sucker for a conga player on a tenor date, and even though he's only on three tracks, Josh Jones brings a lot to this one. I also hope to hear more from Jason Lewis, whose touch on drums is perfect for this stuff.

The Leader also wrote eight of the ten tunes and, guess what, they're good too. Dan Ouellette's liner notes speak to the strength of the compositions, and what hits me is that Schwartz knows how to write for himself — the writing amplifies his playing and vice versa. As for the covers, Rodgers' and Hart's "Where or When" is couched in an intriguing arrangement (by Schwartz) that adds a new dimension to the tune, and Rollins' "Doxy" is similarly transformed. This is not a debut album that knocks you over the head immediately, but it is one that rewards close listening.

Larry Nai



3240 Peralta St. #2, Oakland CA 94608-4130 • Tel: 510 654-3221
Email: anton@antonjazz.com • Fax/Voicemail: 212 656-1888

www.antonjazz.com