



Michael Tracy & Harry Pickens *Conversations*

Sea Breeze Jazz SBJ-3088

The duo format that saxophonist Michael Tracy and pianist Harry Pickens selected for this pure jazz recording lets them relate unencumbered to define each lyrical melody of their thirteen-song program with intuitive grace and personal zeal. As Mike's third album for Sea Breeze Records, **Conversations** represents a meeting of two old friends. They're veterans of the jazz community who take great pride in sharing interpretations of lyric memories by Dave Brubeck, Antonio Carlos Jobim, Rodgers and Hart, Thelonious Monk and Cole Porter.

Mike and Harry are connected through the University of Louisville School of Music in Louisville, Kentucky, where Mike is a Professor of Music and Director of Jazz Studies. Together, they share the joy of improvisation over familiar pieces as well as fresh originals. Harry contributed two songs; friends of theirs contributed several more; and Don Braden, who studied with Mike, wrote one of the more dramatic ballads.

This deeply felt musical conversation begins with Mike's tenor in a vocal-like casting of **"Where or When,"** which brings two mellifluous impressions together seamlessly. Rhythmically solid with a bouncing bass line, the sentimental ballad inspires both artists enthusiastically. Mike's velvet tone and Harry's pick-me-up refrains open the program with fervor. **"Sometime Ago"** follows with a similar attitude. The jazz waltz carries a delightful charm that spins its melody round and round the room. Mike switches to soprano for Don Braden's **"The Wayfarer,"** which casts the duo into a different mode. Here, innovative companions weave a muscular thread that snakes artfully through their interpretation with a driving force.

Monk's **"Ugly Beauty,"** another jazz waltz with a different feel to it, comes on slow and dramatic like a ballet dancer in motion. Mike's soprano gives this classic piece a voice of its own: clear and plaintive. **"Invitation Note"** changes pace with its lovely Brazilian air, giving Mike opportunities to quote from the arsenal of familiar bossa nova tunes at his mind's fingertips. **"Beatrice"** follows with a dramatic edge that lets Harry and Mike edge forward into an advanced state of mind where jazz tickles the intellect.

"Alfonsina y el Mar" features a classical mood where saxophone and piano cascade delicately with running melodic patterns over harmonic arpeggios. Harry's **"Something Songful"** returns the duo to a formula that waltzes in a relaxed manner with soprano sax providing the ties between phrases. Harry enjoys delivering his trademark boogie-woogie style here with the touch that only a seasoned veteran could muster. Here, Mike and Harry are soulful to the core.

"Conversations With Bill" drives strong with rhythmic intensity, Jobim's **"If You Never Come to Me"** floats slowly on lyrical shoulders, and Harry's **"If I Could Only Hold You When You Cry"** completes the mood with the syncopation of a heart deeply affected. Dave Brubeck's **"So Wistfully Sad"** follows with blue colors and a classical framework that allows Mike and Harry to capture its mood eloquently. Their interpretations allow for the kind of conversation that makes friends appreciate what each has to offer. As they close with an upbeat **"I Love Paris,"** the duo makes a substantial statement as to where their hearts lie. With this latest recording, Mike and Harry prove through their musical conversations that inspirations can make a shared experience.

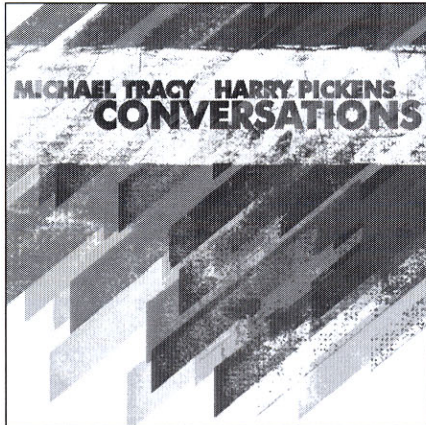
This recording is now available on CD (SBJ-3088). Bar code is - 0-17231-30882-9

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ANNOUNCES THE RELEASE OF
"CONVERSATIONS"
MICHAEL TRACY - HARRY PICKENS

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THE DUO FORMAT THAT SAXOPHONIST MICHAEL TRACY AND PIANIST HARRY PICKENS SELECTED FOR THIS PURE JAZZ RECORDING LETS THEM RELATE UNEMCUMBERED TO DEFINE EACH LYRICAL MELODY OF THEIR THIRTEEN SONG PROGRAM WITH INTUITIVE GRACE AND PERSONAL ZEAL

Selections Include:

1. Where or When
2. Sometime Ago
3. The Wayfarer
4. Ugly Beauty
5. Invitation Note
6. Beatrice
7. Alfonsina y el Mar
8. Something Songful
9. Conversation with Bill
10. If You Never Come to Me
11. If I Could Only Hold You
When You Cry
12. So Wistfully Sad
13. I Love Paris

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