



Featured Artist: Andy Milne

CD Title: Dreams and False Alarms

Year: 2007

Record Label: Songlines

Style: Progressive

Musicians: Andy Milne (piano)



Review:

Hailing from Toronto, Canada pianist Andy Milne earned an Honors degree in music from York University, where he studied with, among others, Oscar Peterson. Encouraged by saxophonist Steve Coleman, Milne made the move to New York in 1991. His experience includes work with artists as diverse as Ravi Coltrane, Ralph Alessi, Carla Cook, Joe Lovano, Archie Shepp, Geri Allen, Dianne Reeves, Robin Eubanks, Cassandra Wilson and Greg Osby. Perhaps best known from his work with Steve Coleman's core unit Five Elements, Milne has added worked as a leader to his resume since 1995. Among the honors he's gathered include being voted "Rising Star Keyboardist" by Down Beat Magazine in 2004 and awarded the Chamber Music America "New Works" commission in 2006.

Dreams and False Alarms, Milne's first solo piano recording, is not the typical jazz recording. It's probably best to approach this recording as an examination into Milne's current state of harmonic construction. The way he overlaps and builds upper-partial chordal-units into blocks of almost polytonal complexity within the framework of 11 non-traditional jazz compositions is, while out of the ordinary, a worthwhile voyage. The casual listener need not spin this disc as there is nothing vaguely approaching hard swing within, but for those looking for an intellectual yet heartfelt introspective approach to the music of today, Milne presents exciting possibilities.

In just under 50 minutes, Milne investigates eight compositions by many of rock music's most dynamic composers, as well as three originals. Through his own unique looking glass, Milne approaches pieces by Joni Mitchell, Bob Marley, Bob Dylan and Neil Young, to list just four of the composers, by looking for areas of harmonic convergence first, and melodic aggregates second. Highlights include a deeply moving version of Dylan's "The Times They Are A-Changin'." Using an ostinato block-chord rhythmic figure as an underpinning, Milne places the melody's fragments into a prism through which Dylan's lines are rendered in one of the warmest renditions yet recorded.

The all-too-short original "Sensei-tions" is a marvelous nugget in the mode of Bartok's short "Microcosmos." Taking a single harmonic concept through a few short permutations before winding it down; this composition is a gem.

Perhaps the only tune which can be described as "up tempo," is the original "The Metamorph." Alternating between a disjunct walking bass-line, tightly constructed right-hand lines and occasional splashes of vertical chordal alignment, the end result pays homage to Art Tatum, his teacher Oscar Peterson and McCoy Tyner, all at the same time.

In this collection of pieces, all influenced by an individually realized broad harmonic palette, Milne's progress and development as both performer and composer is firmly established. Looking back years from now, one can't but believe this anthology of works will be one of his most cherished.

Tracks: Amelia, Geewa, Message In A Bottle, I Shot The Sheriff, After The Goldrush, The Times They Are A-Changin', The Metamorph, Don't Let It Bring You Down, Sensei-tions, The Circle Game and Danny Boy

Record Label Website: <http://www.songlines.com/>

Artist's Website: <http://www.andymilne.com/>

Reviewed by: [Thomas R. Erdmann](#)