

LUMEN

Chamber Works
Adam Berenson

Adam Berenson *Lumen: Chamber Works*

DREAM PLAY

★★★★

Both a jazz pianist and a classical composer, Adam Berenson's work often treats those two worlds like the Large Hadron Collider treats subatomic particles, smashing them together and marveling at the only somewhat predictable results. *Lumen* provides an ideal starting point for exploring the prolific composer's catalogue, compiling material from nearly two decades of recordings onto two discs. The material is presented without regard to chronology, style or theme, so it can often feel like rooting through Berenson's mental attic, unearthing one treasure after another with jarring shifts in tone.

The dense electronic soundscapes of Berenson's "Jnana" series give way to the rigorous, Keith Jarrett-esque solo piano of "Rainer Maria Rilke," which is followed by the abstract swing of the trio tune "Ricerca (For Sven Nykvist)" and the stride-influenced solo piece "... Was Near The Black Plague ..." which segues into the percussive prepared-piano minimalism of "A Little Boy Opened A Window 3." Both discs proceed through such willfully eclectic territory before ending on a string quartet.

Disc one concludes with the premiere of "String Quartet #3," recorded live in Philadelphia last summer by the renowned JACK Quartet. The 15-minute piece deals in focused, miniscule gestures, finely detailed textures and shocking dynamic contrasts. "String Quartet #1," recorded in 1997 in Boston, ventures a bit further into the realm of melody while still playing with strident contrasts and tense silences. Like the discs overall, these two pieces reveal a composer of post-modern vision and staggeringly wide-ranging interests.

—Shaun Brady

Lumen: Disc 1: Transpersonal; Jnana 10; Late 20th Century Stomp; Emotional Idiot; Prose Surrealism; Very Soon Mankind Will No Longer Be A Useless Passion (Broadway Melody Of 1996); Jnana 13; Rainer Maria Rilke; Ricercar (For Sven Nykvist); ... Was Near The Black Plague ...; A Little Boy Opened A Window 3; ... Searching ... Everywhere ...; Dithyramb; Jnana 8; Treaty Of Dancing Rabbit Creek; String Quartet #3. (76:30) Disc 2: "I"; Respectable People; Stars 1; The Adytum; Tickled To Death; Jnana 18; Ingrid Thulin; Through This Stillness; Yasujiro Ozu; Spooky Action At A Distance; String Quartet #1. (79:02)

Personnel: Adam Berenson, piano, prepared piano, synthesizer, percussion, live electronics; The JACK Quartet, strings; Bob Moses, drums, percussion; Scott Barnum, bass, electronics; Bill Marconi, percussion, electronics; Eric Hofbauer, guitar; Yukako Funahashi, Annette Chan, violin; Ilana Schroeder, viola; Sigurgeir Agnarsson, cello.

Ordering info: adamberenson.com