

Confessions

Steve Dobrogosz with Pétur "Island" Östlund

A	CONFESSIONS	4'55"	B	JULIA	2'20"
	ECNAMOR	3'25"		TRADITIONAL	4'20"
	DECENTRAL	3'30"		NOTHING AT ALL	2'10"
	AN APPEAL	4'35"		HEARTSTRINGS/LOKA	9'25"
	BACK HOME	4'10"		WISHING SONG	2'15"

All tunes by Steve Dobrogosz — except "Julia" by Lennon/McCartney, BMI

Steve Dobrogosz - piano

Pétur Östlund - cymbals, gong, triangle, Balanesian tantric bell

On "An Appeal": Steve Dobrogosz, Bobo Stenson - pianos

Pétur Östlund, Alex Riel - gongs

Steve Dobrogosz was born in 1956 in Pennsylvania, USA. He has been living in Stockholm, Sweden since '78 and has established a reputation as one of the foremost jazzpianists in Scandinavia. He has performed and recorded with among others: Arild Andersen, Kenny Wheeler, Paul Motian (LP "Lifelines" - ECM), Eje Thelin Group (LP "Bits and Pieces" - Phono Suecia), Radka Toneff (LP "Fairy Tales" - Odin), Steve Dobrogosz Trio (LP "Songs" - Caprice).

Confessions are usually associated with brutal disclosures, ones' most private feelings, and the utmost truths about love. But if intimate experience is turned into sensationalism, the feelings, words, notes and colors in the end lose their depth, and it all becomes one smooth surface. This is today's tragedy.

At the same time, however, there is always an opposite reaction. Today it isn't candid exposure that is the greatest taboo, but rather the sensitive and the unsayable. That which is so fragile and tender that it risks being broken at the slightest mention; overwhelming impressions that risk being trivialized by word and form.

It is this great taboo that Steve Dobrogosz's "Confessions" is about. He has named one piece **Ecnamor** (read it backwards). Two melodies follow each other, two melodies that also are two rhythms, braided into one another. The notes entreat, filled with affection. The heart swells so large that it simply must speak . . .

But love never becomes a sentimental idyll, drifting away in melancholy. It lives just because it is constantly threatened. The title song, **Confessions**, caresses in its stillness. Suddenly the calm is broken and its anguished and restless bottom is revealed.

Each track on this album is a separate experience. On **Decentral** fingers sing and dance on the keys while cymbals sting, cut and slide in between. Then the

rolls change and Pétur Östlund's percussion takes over while Steve flickers in and out. One finds many of jazzes principles in this music, but they are simplified and distilled, free of clichés. This playful duel ends so abruptly that one feels it could have gone on indefinitely.

By simplifying and refining Steve often creates a compact wholeness, as in the pattern that emerges as he and Bobo Stenson play around each other. A unified movement slowly outlining a curve, **An Appeal**.

Traditional is one long thundering crescendo, a summation, as it were, of all the extremes that have become conventional in jazz. The piano and gong roar and hiss, swishing through the brain in a nearly physical climax.

A theme can develop in many ways in Steve's music. In **Heartstrings/Loka** he sinks down over and over in the same few tones, building a dramatic tension before finally throwing himself into a wall of sound.

Julia is a song of quiet spirit, a tribute to John Lennon. **Nothing at All** is a sketch, an impression. **Wishing Song**, a melody of longing and dreams. There is an immediacy in all of these pieces. They are songs in the true sense, so full of feeling that no words are necessary. **Back Home** is a broad, heavy American ballad, breathing love for the homeland. The image here is tangible, the horizon distinct.

The combination of piano and percussion on this album provides a great melodic freedom. Pétur Östlund, like Steve, has a musical background spanning a spectrum of genres. He is able to create atmosphere in a song as few other percussionist - drummers. His range of expression runs from whispering nuances to cries and explosions.

Steve's music is visual. It suggests images and events within the listener. It never relies solely on technique, but rather is aimed at giving form and order to actuality. The music is open in the sense that one can make it ones' own. It cannot be described within the boundaries of any idiom.

Erik Centerwall