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Bio information: **IDEAL BREAD**

Title: **TRANSMIT – VOLUME 2 OF THE MUSIC OF STEVE LACY** (Cuneiform Rune 296)

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**FILE UNDER: JAZZ**

*“Like a baker makes his bread, I make music...If I make the same bread tomorrow, that bores me...I have to remake it, I have to do better...I’m always looking for...the ideal bread.” – Steve Lacy, April, 1976*

*“The disc functions both as an exacting yet refreshingly unfussy homage to Lacy’s work and a snapshot of four versatile, highly sympathetic improvisers in their prime.” – The Wire*

*“They really own this music, turning each tune inside out, never paying stale homage to Lacy but celebrating the multi-faceted nature of his music.” – Signal to Noise*

*“The Ideal Bread lays down a serious marker for the posthumous evolution of Steve Lacy’s music.” – Point of Departure*

**Transmit** is the second album from the **Steve Lacy** repertory band **Ideal Bread**. The quartet of expert improvisers and composers includes leader and baritone saxophonist **Josh Sinton**, trumpeter **Kirk Knuffke**, bassist **Reuben Radding** and drummer **Tomas Fujiwara**; they adhere to Lacy’s unique vision while giving each composition new life with their unique approach.

If anyone deserves such a project, it is soprano saxophone innovator Steve Lacy (1930-2004). He was an integral component of **Cecil Taylor**’s first unit, having emerged from the Dixieland revival of the late 1950s; he would then go on to liberate the soprano saxophone and reform the landscape of composition in improvised music. “Steve Lacy is one of the most idiosyncratic composers in what we call free jazz,” states Josh Sinton. “People who love free music may initially have a hard time coming to terms with his work, because they aren’t ready for the repetition and traditional rigor he brought to his pieces.”

Sinton has first-hand experience with Lacy’s brand of disciplined freedom. He studied with the revered soprano saxophonist from 2002-2004, as he finished up a graduate degree in jazz performance at **New England Conservatory**. “I took lessons from him and served as his copyist, but I also would catch his shows as often as I could. Often, we would just get together and talk. I learned something from him on every occasion.” Upon moving to Brooklyn, New York in the summer of 2004, Sinton would bring Lacy’s music to many of his introductory jam sessions. “Not many people were playing Lacy’s pieces in New York at that time,” states Sinton. The music is a continual source of challenge and inspiration to Sinton. “I’m still mystified by Lacy’s approach,” Sinton muses. “Some of his writing has the repetitive quality of a nursery rhyme, some of it is more akin to **Webern** or other atonal composers. I’d watch Steve respond to questions about his compositional method by playing the compositions, and I am also coming to terms with the music by playing it.” The group has been performing regularly since 2006. The group has performed with Lacy’s widow and long-standing collaborator, cellist and vocalist **Irene Aebi**, and she introduced Sinton to some of the tunes on *Ideal Bread*’s second release.

Sinton compares *Ideal Bread*’s approach to Lacy’s championing of iconoclasts such as **Thelonious Monk** or **Herbie Nichols**. “I listen to multiple versions of a tune, and I treat the repeated elements as the composition; the rest is determined case by case.” Despite wishing to remain loyal to Lacy’s conceptions, the quartet’s 2008 eponymous debut (**KMB**) demonstrated with force that *Ideal Bread* is no mere group of imitators. **Transmit** makes the case even more clearly. Their rollicking reading of *The Dumps* combines elements from several versions of the tune, which Lacy performed in both solo and ensemble situations. Lacy’s trademark near-unisons stand out as Radding and Fujiwara provide angular and rhythmically varied support to Sinton and Knuffke as they blow over this freebop masterpiece. The four musicians play with the tightness and beauty of any classical music ensemble, most evidently in the Monk-ishly quirky polyphony of *Flakes*. Sinton calls this early 1970s piece one of Lacy’s “greatest hits,” and it appears on many of his finest albums.

Knuffke’s solo on *Flakes* references a tiny half-step motive from the tune’s intro, which, according to Sinton, is quite deliberate. “When I’d perform with Lacy, he would have us craft our solos from material found in the composition, either directly or by implication. That is often the approach we take.” Sinton’s hard-driving solo on *As Usual* derives from the tune’s highly chromatic mode. Far from impeding freedom, the practice increases the group’s focus, allowing them to expose and explore each compositional structure in minute detail while unifying each performance.

The disc exudes vigor as a live feel is constantly palpable. A first-rate recording and mix captures each musician’s contributions in clear and present sound. Every nuance in Fujiwara’s brush work carries *The Breath* airily along, and Radding’s resonantly introspective solo introduction to *Clichés* sings and grooves by turn before the band kicks it into high gear. It all adds up to a wonderful journey through Lacy’s startling and diverse sound-world, one which the composer most certainly would have been proud of.

[Press release courtesy of **Fully Altered Media**]

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