



chris gestrin
stillpoint

The first time I saw Chris Gestrin perform was the summer of 1993 at a small Vancouver jazz club called the Blue Note. Barely 20 years old, he was playing standards alongside vocalist Coco Love Alcorn, and just beginning to find his footing in the local jazz scene. But already it was obvious that his was a natural talent, expressed with a meticulousness that was unmistakable. Leaning over the piano keys, Gestrin played with such intensity that it seemed as though it would take a massive earthquake to rattle his concentration. Then, more often than not, when the tune was finished, he would just lift his head slowly, lean back, and smile warmly as if he were resurfacing from the deep.

Since then, Gestrin has covered a considerable amount of both musical and professional ground. A graduate of Boston's Berklee College of Music, and top prizewinner of the 1996 Europ' Jazz Contest, he has become one of Vancouver's busiest pianists, keyboardists, effects artists, and soundtrack composers. And while he has performed and recorded with a range of jazz artists - including Kate Hammett-Vaughan and Chris Tarry - he has also ventured into fusion, funk, roots music (Zubot and Dawson's Tractor Parts) and hip-hop (K-OS's Exit and The Rascalz's Global Warning).

But those are other people, other places - impressive marking posts on a career path. Gestrin's greatest achievements are the breadth of his ability, the maturity of his sound, and the naturalness of his style - all of which are evinced on Stillpoint.

While mixing the acoustic and the electronic is nothing new (many players of his generation blend catchy electronic loops and fuzzed-out samples with more traditional jazz stylings), Gestrin is one of the few who manages to bring the two together seamlessly: on Stillpoint the electronics never sound added in, and the lyricism of the acoustic piano never gets lost in the electronic shuffle. Rather, each distinct element gets gently folded in and finds its place in the intricate mix (with a few surprises saved for those who can play back the SACD surround-sound version).

"At first, there are all these different rhythmic elements along with the samples and the melody," says Gestrin of 'Complex One/City'. "So you don't really hear where the tempo is at first. But then everything kind of comes together when all the grooves interact, so it's really free-sounding, but at the same time there's a pulse to it."

Equally refined musicians, all of the collaborators Gestrin works with share his love for experimentation and improvisation. On 'Cliffs and Clouds' Dylan van der Schyff - one of the west coast's finest percussionists - complements Gestrin's potlids and dulcimer with a counterpoint of cymbals. Saxophonist Jon Bentley solos with elegance and soulfulness on 'Never Summer Range', while trumpeter Brad Turner brings his dense moodiness to the trio improv 'Outpost'. Bassist André Lachance constantly underpins the music with his bold, thoughtful playing. And a guest appearance on clay pot by Pepe Danza on 'Complex One/City', as well as ethereal vocals by Gestrin's fiancée Deanna Newton on '2.23 Restart', broadens the album's diverse sound even further.

While much of the record - especially tracks such as Gestrin's solo improvisation 'This Past Tuesday' - carries a calm, almost meditative quality, as well as hints of playfulness, it is also rich in texture. "I'm heavily influenced by the ECM sort of sound, which in turn plays a part in my music. And there's a lot of electronic music that I like," explains Gestrin. "The term 'New Age' comes to mind, but not New Age as in rain falling while I'm in the bath with my crystals. It's more like a soundtrack to a film that doesn't exist."

That's exactly how it sounds. With a slow-burning centre that radiates outward in myriad directions, Stillpoint evokes an array of sensory images. And, with consistent drive and movement, the music propels the listener from beginning to end. But remarkably, the heat at its core never seems to dissipate. That feel, says Gestrin, is what gave the album its title.

"The stillpoint is that place in life where you're not concerned with what is about to happen or what has already happened. You're content where you are, and everything is just happening," he explains. "I thought that really relates to improvising music - when you're in the moment, and you're just playing. You're not concerned that you might have just hit a wrong note, and you're not worried about where you're going or how it's going to end. It's just happening, and the music is just flowing around you. That's the stillpoint."

Jennifer Van Evra, Vancouver, April 2002

Recorded and mixed by Shawn Pierce / Recorded July 10 and 11, 2001 and mixed in analogue to 2-channel 24/96 July 18 and 19, 2001 at The Factory, Vancouver; assistant engineer Sheldon Zaharko / Mixed in analogue to 5-channel DSD February 27-March 1, 2002 at Blue Wave Productions, Vancouver; assistant engineer Matthew Marteinsson / Edited, transferred to Direct Stream Digital, and mastered by Graemme Brown, Zen Mastering, Vancouver

Design by Mitch Kinney (mitchkinney@shaw.ca or mitchkinney@hotmail.com)

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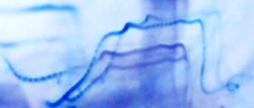
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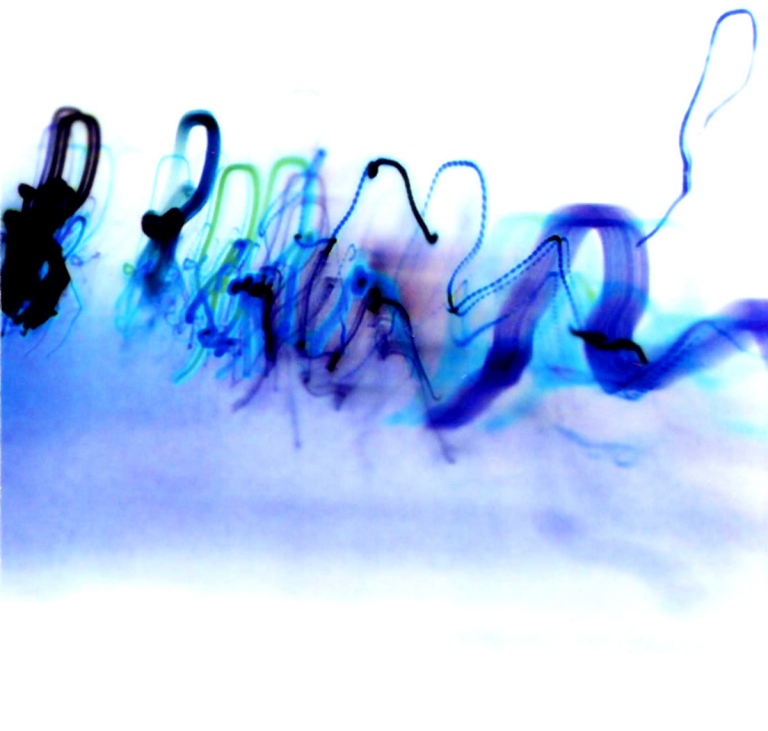
1. **Stillpoint** (5:00) **CG** - piano **AL** - bass **DvdS** - drums
2. **Never Summer Range** (8:06) **JB** - tenor sax, bass clarinet
CG - piano, synthesizer, sampler, windchimes, electronics **AL** - bass **DvdS** - drums, electronics
3. **Outpost** (4:37) **BT** - trumpet **CG** - piano, electronics **AL** - bass
4. **Complex One/City** (7:34) **BT** - trumpet **JB** - tenor sax, bass clarinet
CG - piano, sampler, acoustic bass loop, dulcimer and shaker loops, programmed percussion
AL - bass **DvdS** - drums, percussion, electronics **JD** - udu, African shakers, additional percussion
5. **This Past Tuesday** (2:17) **CG** - piano
6. **Words Along a Wire** (8:42) **BT** - trumpet, electronics **JB** - tenor sax, electronics
CG - piano, synthesizer, sampler, shakers, tenor recorder, electronics **AL** - bass, dulcimer
DvdS - drums, percussion
7. **Movement and Perspective** (8:14) **BT** - trumpet **JB** - tenor sax
CG - piano **AL** - bass **DvdS** - drums
8. **Cliffs and Clouds** (4:35) **JB** - soprano sax **CG** - potlids, dulcimer, piano, synthesizer
DvdS - drums, percussion
9. **My Painted Dream Bird** (5:59) **BT** - flugelhorn **JB** - tenor sax **CG** - piano
AL - bass **DvdS** - drums
10. **Interview With a Child** (2:09) **CG** - piano **AL** - bass **DvdS** - drums
11. **2.23 Restart** (9:26) **BT** - trumpet **JB** - soprano sax **DN** - voice
CG - synthesizer, sampler, voice **DvdS** - drums
12. **Shades of Night Descending** (4:42) **BT** - trumpet, electronics
JB - soprano sax, electronics **CG** - piano, sampler, synthesizer, electronics
AL - bass, shaker **DvdS** - drums, percussion

2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11 by Chris Gestrin, 1, 10 by Gestrin/Lachance/van der Schyff, 3 by Gestrin/Turner/Lachance,
6, 12 by Gestrin/Turner/Bentley/Lachance/van der Schyff / All tunes Maximum Publishing, SOCAN

Discography as leader:

Chris Gestrin Quartet, Times that do not belong to us (1997; re-released 2001, Maximum Jazz MAX-7001)
Chris Gestrin, Trio (2000, Maximum Jazz MAX-0066) Chris Gestrin/Russ Klyne, Varuna (forthcoming)





chris gestrin piano, synthesizers, sampler, electronics
 brad turner trumpet, flugelhorn, electronics
 jon bentley tenor & soprano saxophone, bass clarinet, electronics
 andre laclanche acoustic bass
 dylan van der schijff drums, percussion, electronics
 joseph "pepe" danza percussion (4)
 deanna newton voice (11)



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24 bit/96K **RAJAR** recording mixed in analogue to 5-channel

SONGLINES

SGL SA1540-2



DSD
Direct Stream Digital

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1. stillpoint
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7. movement and perspective
8. cliffs and clouds
9. my painted dream bird
10. interview with a child
11. 2.23 restart
12. shades of night descending

total time 71:22

