



BRIAN LYNCH AND EMMET COHEN

QUESTIONED ANSWER (Hollistic MusicWorks)



Brian Lynch met Emmet Cohen in 2011 when he began teaching at the Frost School of Music at the University of Miami, where Cohen was an undergraduate. Three tracks on this album, all standards, are trumpet/piano duos. Six tracks, all originals, add Boris Kozlov on bass and Billy Hart on drums.

Lynch is an elite trumpet player. From the opening quartet piece, his own “Cambios,” he reminds you why cavalries used buglers to sound the charge. His commanding announcements flow into complicated concepts, which he executes with clarity and precision. Unlike many skilled practitioners of his instrument, he rarely sounds technical. His ventures have an edge of personal urgency. Considered as a trumpet recital, *Questioned Answer* is a substantial document.

But the surprise here is Cohen. When established veterans make records with their students, they are usually doing favors. Not this time. Take “How Deep Is the Ocean.” Lynch implies the melody in a freehand sketch. Then Cohen takes over, bursting with new ideas about Irving Berlin’s old song. His solo is multiple lines of thought sustained concurrently. Lots of young pianists have chops and energy, but Cohen also has an instinct for meaningful aesthetic form. His spilling runs and chiming resolutions are necessary to an overall design.

Theme statements tend to be loose with the facts, and in the give-and-take, Cohen

matches his teacher, thrust for thrust. Cohen instigates in the ensemble, with jabbing, provocative comping. His solo on his own “Distant Hallow” makes as many startling hard turns as anything Lynch plays. On “Buddy,” Lynch’s convoluted, vivid solo is not easy for a young player to follow. Cohen embeds his response within Hart’s thrashing cymbals. He sounds undaunted. It should be fun to watch his future unfold.

THOMAS CONRAD



▲ “A substantial document”: Brian Lynch (left) and Emmet Cohen

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Brian Lynch and Emmet Cohen

In quartet and duo

questioned answer

featuring Billy Hart & Boris Kozlov



Hollistic MusicWorks HMW 12

Brian Lynch/Emmet Cohen *Questioned Answer*

HOLLISTIC MUSICWORKS 12

★★★★

Veteran trumpeter Brian Lynch first met pianist Emmet Cohen in 2011 when Cohen was a student at the University of Miami. Lynch quickly recognized Cohen’s potential, and he became one of the pianist’s mentors and an important teacher. They played together often during the following year, with *Questioned Answer* (recorded in September and October 2012) being the result.

With bassist Boris Kozlov and drummer Billy Hart completing the quartet, the group performs three originals apiece by the co-leaders. In addition, there are explorations of three standards by



the duo of Lynch and Cohen.

Lynch has long had the ability to effortlessly essay complex chord changes while retaining his warm tone. Even at his most fiery, he sounds relaxed, and his jumps into the upper register are a natural part of his explorative style. Cohen is particularly impressive throughout this set. While there are times when he hints a bit at McCoy Tyner and early Herbie Hancock, he mostly sounds quite original, stretching the modern mainstream.

Lynch’s three pieces (“Cambios,” “Buddy” and “Questioned Answer”) each have very advanced chord changes that inspire the trumpeter to play at his most fiery. Cohen rises up to the challenge, while Kozlov and Hart take brief solos and keep the music stimulating. Cohen’s originals (“Dark Passenger,” “Distant Hallow” and “Petty Theft”) are colorful and unpredictable. Parts of “Petty Theft” find the quartet sounding like they are creating a free improvisation.

Each of the standards is reinvented by the duo to an extent. On “How Deep Is The Ocean,” the rhythm is felt while rarely stated, and one can feel the presence of the melody even though it is mostly just hinted at. While “I Wish I Knew” is given a fairly straightforward treatment, “Just In Time” has some fascinating interplay between the two soloists. All in all, *Questioned Answer* features Lynch and Cohen bringing out the best in each other.

—Scott Yanow

Questioned Answer: Cambios; Dark Passenger; How Deep Is The Ocean; Buddy; Distant Hallow; I Wish I Knew; Petty Theft; Just In Time; Questioned Answer. (73:51)

Personnel: Brian Lynch, trumpet; Emmet Cohen, piano; Boris Kozlov, bass; Billy Hart, drums.

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