

# AUDIOPHILE AUDITION

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## Category: Music

Manhattan New Music Project performs the music of Paul Nash - Jazz Cycles - MNMP Records 52:33:

★★★★



(Shane Endsley, trumpet; Bruce Williamson, alto & soprano sax; Tim Ries, tenor sax; Vic Juris, guitar; Jay Anderson, bass; Grisha Alexiev, drums)

Paul Nash was a composer, educator and jazz guitarist with degrees in both jazz and classical composition. He created The Paul Nash Ensemble in 1977, of which trumpeter Mark Isham was a member. He also helped organize the Bay Area Jazz Composers Orchestra which featured such stars as Tom Harrell and David Samuels and merges jazz and classical music. He moved to NYC in 1990, founded the Manhattan New Music Project and wrote chamber music, pieces for orchestra, and playful avant works inspired by John Cage and Stockhausen.

In 2003 Nash learned he had a fatal brain tumor and determined to leave a final legacy to his career. He set about a project to remaster and reissue his earlier works, and to create a new two-CD project, of which this disc is the first. The 15 tracks deal with some of the various aspects of jazz compositions with which Nash dealt during his career. The first thing that sets the music apart is that it sounds little like a typical modern jazz sextet. The writing is more chamber music in style, with a classical approach to structure and form. It struck me as a less tonal, more contemporary version of works such as Johnny Richards' Adoration of the Muses. But some of the pieces - such as Night Flight - have a very strong beat and swing madly. And there are some wilder, free-jazzish solos.

Altogether a fascinating musical journey. Makes me anxious to hear the second of the new CDs, a work combining Nash's more avant writing with the familiar tone of film noir soundtrack music. Nash made it, with difficulty, thru the mixing sessions for these albums, and passed away six weeks later.

TrackList: Passacaglia, Night Flight, Desire, Wind Over the Lake, Interlude 1, Strange Rife, Outside In, Ballad for T, Interlude 2, Interlude 3, It's Only a Dream, Tamalpais Night, Starlit Skylight, Night Flight (reprise), Epilogue.

- John Henry

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