

## Michael Brecker and sextet - Pilgrimage - Heads Up

*The final recording by the preeminent jazz saxophonist and composer Michael Brecker, who died on January 13 after a long battle with MDS and leukemia.*



**Michael Brecker and sextet - Pilgrimage - Heads Up HUCD 3095, 77:46 min. \*\*\*\*:**

(Michael Brecker, tenor sax & EWI; Pat Metheny, guitars; Herbie Hancock/Brad Mehldau, piano; John Patitucci, bass; Jack DeJohnette, drums)

This historic CD is the final recording by the preeminent jazz saxophonist and composer Michael Brecker, who died on January 13 after a long battle with MDS and leukemia. The album title is deliberate, alluding to the musician's final journey. His dedication to the music kept him going for this last session of August 2006, and his advanced condition was kept from most of the leading players who joined him in the studio by producer Darryl Pitt. Pat Metheny called it "...one of the great codas in modern music history. It's one of the most amazing, powerful, unbelievable things that I - and all who were there - have ever experienced or will ever see."

All nine compositions are from Michael Brecker. Most are not strong on diatonic melodies but maintain interest with frequent harmonic and rhythmic changes. Half Moon Lane seems to have the most unforgettable melody; Brecker's tone in the upper register is very smooth and not strained-sounding as with some tenor players. Tumbleweed is a wildly tumbling extravaganza with exchanges between Metheny and Brecker on the EWI that sound a bit like some of the more intense efforts of Metheny's own band. It is followed by the quiet introspective ballad When Can I Kiss You Again? The credits list (if you look carefully) on which tracks pianist Hancock is heard and which went to Brad Mehldau - they divided them up 4 & 5 apiece. There's an uncredited Fender Rhodes heard on the closing track, Pilgrimage, evidently played by Herbie Hancock.

TrackList: The Mean Time; Five Months from Midnight; Anagram; Tumbleweed; When Can I Kiss You Again?; Cardinal Rule; Half Moon Lane, Loose Threads; Pilgrimage.

- John Henry

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