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Featured Artist: Kevin Hays

CD Title: For Heaven's Sake

Year: 2006

Record Label: Music Eyes

Style: Contemporary Jazz

Musicians: Kevin Hays (piano), Doug Weiss (double bass), Bill Stewart (drums)

Review:

Featured on dozens of recordings with several leading jazz artists, 10 CDs as a leader himself, 3 included on the renowned Blue Note Records, Kevin Hays is amongst the most brilliant pianist/keyboardists and composers in the current international jazz panorama.

He played with Benny Golson, Ron Carter, Joe Henderson, Roy Haynes, Donald Harrison, Chris Potter, Al Foster, Buster Williams, Art Farmer, but 1995 is the year when the great Sonny Rollins invited him to join his own group, and a year and a half later guitarist John Scofield wanted him to tour in his celebrated "Quiet" band. Hays also performs worldwide in solo concerts and as a member of The Sangha Quartet, which features young and well known American jazz players Seamus Blake (tenor sax), Larry Grenadier (double bass), and Bill Stewart (drums). Yet, the group that characterizes him best is his own trio, which lines up as permanent elements bass player Doug Weiss (one of the most demanded bassists on the present New York jazz scene: together with Brad Mehldau, Lee Konitz, Toshiko Akiyoshi, Chris Potter, Joe Williams and Fred Hersch) and drummer Bill Stewart (whose bursting rhythm force claimed the international critics' attention since his tour with John Scofield's band, but also in Larry Goldings trio, and with Maceo Parker, Dave Holland, Marc Copland, Bill Carrothers, Eddie Henderson, Larry Grenadier). In *For Heaven's Sake* Kevin Hays Trio masterfully features some jazz standards.

Hays' touch is swift and intense, able to create suggestive atmosphere assisted, in that, by Stewart's imaginative cadences and Weiss' deep sound, reliable timing and flawless intonation, as on the lead-track *For Heaven's Sake*, or on delicate Shorter's "Lady Day", or absorbing Rollin's "Sonny Moon for Two".

Weiss' sensitiveness is proven on the starting solo of "Beatrice", where Stewart's brushes whisper the light timing over which Hays articulates his impro. A square beat marks Young's "Beautiful Love", whereas the trio renders his the most appreciable interpretation on "It could happen to You". Such a brilliant record must close with If ever "I Should Leave You" and Ellington's "Caravan", two fast pieces where the compound combination of energy by the three performers appears in all its power.

Recorded and mixed in New York, at Acoustic Recording by Michael Brorby, January 5, 2005, and released by the Italian label MusicEyes, this *For Heaven's Sake* consolidates Hays as jazzist gifted with personal style suffused through enviable versatility, precise in both soft ballads and fast paced rhythms, a surprising piano player who affirms himself amongst the most interesting talents of international jazz piano.

Tracks: Sonny Moon For Two, For Heaven's Sake, Lady Day, Beatrice, Beautiful Love, It Could Happen To You, If Ever I Should Leave You, Caravan

Record Label Website: <http://www.musiceyes.com>

Reviewed by: Andrew Rigmore



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