

Downtown Music Gallery
NEWSLETTER - MAY 7th, 2004

EXTENSION ENSEMBLE - New York Presence (Summit Records 389) This local brass quintet performs an interesting program of music by Dave Douglas, Elliott Sharp, John Cage, Moondog, Peter Erskine, Earle Brown, David Loeb and Elliot Goldenthal. Each of the sixteen pieces presented here deals with different challenges, different styles, genres and approaches. Goldenthal's "Quintet No. 2" has haunting, rich harmonies for all five horns which move in spurts. Moondog's charming "Instrumental Round No. 1 in Snaketime" is elegant and just slightly twisted. E. Sharp's "Arterial" is a strange and wonderful work for somber horns which seem to shift between inter-connected sections. Dave Douglas' "Private Music" begins quietly and playfully, with some majestic passages that are transformed into some fine bluesy sections in the second part. Earle Brown's "December 1952" deals with an open-ended form and room for interpretation since the score is a graphic one. The performance here is cautious and rather cerebral. For John Cage's "Five", each member of the quintet was recorded separately and then edited in the studio - the result is a series of eerie drones. Moondog's "Pastorale" is another enchanting sort of lullaby and a nice way to bring this to a close.

Downtown Music Gallery
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