



**Ray Jozwiak**  
**Put A Finger On It**  
**[Bosky Dell & Syvan Glade]**

From the first keys, the master touch of Ray Jozwiak impresses. "Honolulu Harry" (a very Hoagy Carmichael-like title) demonstrates a T. Monkish blurring of time, a slow syncopation moving in and out of the strictures of standard time. Mr. J. takes not quite "giant steps," and then goes on contrapuntal runs in his exploration of themes and variations.

In "Cowboy Justice," the second tune, his left hand plies the bottom with a softly persistent and pounding rhythm, as his right works melody, scales, runs, and figures all over the keyboard. His sense and choice of rhythm is always appropriate and interesting—not something easy to manage in a solo work. He makes something that in other less capable hands could easily become monotonous,

creative. The middle of "Glorious Freedom" (that is) opens up some stride walking and more well-chosen phrases and riffs—almost a separate song entirely. Mr. J. never dwells on a string of notes too long, and his internal sense of timing matches his exceptional external expression and judgment. No matter how good the single theme, phrase, or run, he never gets so enamored of it, as many musicians might, that it extends into mediocrity.

I credit his innate artistic intelligence—if not the "multitude of accordion lessons" provided by his late father, Michael, and mentioned in his liner notes. "...Freedom" merges easily and perhaps emblematically into "Can't Quite." A telling sequence of song titles.

This work is miked, engineered, and produced with distinction by Jason George of Nice Package. I can close my eyes during a song and see the piano before me, perpendicular to my listening position, the player seated at speaker left and the grand piano open at the center of the sound field. "T-Tango" has a more choral, commercial feel, if you will. There is something sensual and compelling about the seductive, relentless, rhythmic intimacy of this eponymous namesake of the enthralling dance. A phrase and feeling here and there reminds me of Dizzy Gillespie's "A Night in Tunisia."

My only regret is that the last piece, "No Regrets," is not as original sounding as most of the other pieces. It seems much more derivative in its chorus, if not its melody. Still, the playing is superlative, and its sense of fun is infectious.

In his liner notes, Mr. J. also thanks "my next door neighbors (who hear as much piano as I do)"—a witty appreciation and expression of proximity and gratitude. Ray Jozwiak is a virtuoso. I would love to hear him play some night in dimly-lit cabaret or bar, where the only sound heard is his piano, the only sight is the playing of shadowy fingers in the candlelight across the keys, and the only internal process, besides your breathing, is your imagination reveling in the infinite possibilities and potential of all fine music to free your mind from the moment you are in to timelessness.

-Jim Nash