

## ANAT FORT TRIO

*And If* (ECM)



Celebrating a decade of collaboration, pianist Anat Fort's second outing on ECM features her working trio of Gary Wang on bass and Roland

Schneider on drums. *And If* consists of originals all composed by Fort, the opening and closing pieces dedicated to renowned drummer Paul Motian, who appeared on her ECM debut. Motian and Paul Bley, with whom Fort studied improvisation, are among Fort's most prominent influences; others include Bill Evans and Keith Jarrett.

A vast desert landscape surrounding the Dead Sea, depicted on the album's cover, sets the mood and tone; the tunes are imbued with an expansiveness that complements Fort's beautiful, evocative melodies. Classically trained in her native Israel and active on the NYC scene, Fort seamlessly negotiates the worlds of classical music, jazz and Middle Eastern rhythms and textures. The haunting opener, "Paul Motian

(1)," is followed by "Clouds Moving," capturing a sense of atmospheric movement. "Some" is a gently driving vehicle of grace and possibility. The Middle Eastern influence on Fort's writing is perhaps most evident in "Something 'Bout Camels" (a re-working of material from Fort's previous recording).

Coming on the heels of hundreds of live performances, *And If* reflects the underlying chemistry that is the fruit of the trio's longstanding partnership. The disc showcases Fort's unique sensibility and strength as a composer and player, as well as the nuanced contributions of her bandmates.

**SHARONNE COHEN**