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Lunapark: Upright Acoustic

Lunapark is the brainchild of Gerhard Graml, a talented jazz musician and an outstanding bassist. *Upright Acoustic* is their third release and all of the songs were penned by Graml although he does have help from a few friends including Sascha Otto (flute), Leon Gruenbaum (saxophone), Christian Zieglwanger (drums), Hermann Aigner (drums), Anne Seufert (solo piano) and Gabe Faulkner-Maklin (tapes, electronics).

Graml has extensive musical training and graduated from the Conservatory of Music with a degree in Jazz Bass and Music Education. He has worked with many jazz musicians and has written numerous film scores. The music Lunapark presents is strongly rooted in jazz with a heavy emphasis on flute, bass and drums. The extensive use of flute gives the music an organic quality and contrasts nicely with the electronic touches found throughout the disc's eleven tunes. There are some ripping flute solos and the bass work of Graml is excellent throughout as he deftly exhibits intricate runs all the while providing a steady backbone upon which these songs are built.

Some of these songs push the boundaries of traditional jazz and enter into experimental territory, especially when the playing takes on a more free-form approach so you can expect lots of tempo changes



and very good musicianship.

The disc starts with the pure jazz of "Gut & Schön" with its stellar flute play, atmospheric keys, interesting drum patterns and a very good bass groove. The dreamy keyboards are in nice contrast to the intensity of the flute. Expect more of the same with the jazzy soundscapes of "Megaphone Beach". Again, the flute and bass are the stars of the show. The song moves from traditional jazz territory to a more avant-garde, experimental sound with discordant electronic effects and sporadic drumming before returning to a more standard melodic structure. "Boom Bay" features chanting style vocals with a Middle Eastern edge. I prefer the instrumental bits as the vocals do not do much for me. Two of the album's shortest songs, "Glass Princess (From Outer Space)" and "Ricerca" feature the tasty piano playing of Anne Seufert and offer a reprieve from the flute centered songs surrounding them. Another highlight is the bass playing in "Splendor Lucis" where Graml really shows his chops.

Although I preferred some songs over others, this is a very good jazz CD which should be well received by the prog community and one that any fan of jazz should check out.

Track Listing:

1. Gut & Schön (6:54)
2. Megaphone Beach (6:37)
3. Boom Bay (3:09)
4. Glass prisoner (From Outer Space) (1:53)
5. Happy Accident (10:22)
6. Panchromatica (6:11)
7. Viva Insomnia (6:34)
8. Ricerca (2:30)
9. Good People Only (4:48)
10. Splendor Lucis (5:30)
11. Oysters for Vultaggio (3:05)

Added: October 5th 2009


Reviewer: Jon Neudorf


Score: ★★★★★

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