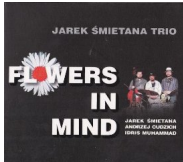


Jarek Smietana Trio - Flowers in Mind (2012)

Written by bluesever

Monday, 24 October 2016 15:24 -

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01. *As Good as Always* (J. Śmietana) 02. *Bloommdido* (Ch. Parker) 03. *Flowers in Mind* (J. Śmietana) 04. *Papa Daddy and Me* (J. Dejohnette) 05. *Back to the Roots* (J. Śmietana) 06. *Sometimes in Winter...* (J. Śmietana) 07. *Eisenhower* (J. Scofield) 08. *Beatrice* (S. Rivers) 09. *Blessing* (O. Coleman) 10. *Untitled Blues* (unknown, arr. J. Śmietana) Jarek Śmietana - guitar Andrzej Cudzich - bass Idris Muhammad – drums

Jarek Śmietana belongs to those "greats" of Polish Jazz. He participated in some of its legendary recordings like on Zbigniew Seifert's "Kilimanjaro" (1978). He also formed his own band Extra Ball which was one of the few interesting bands in 80ties in Poland. However since then he hasn't recorded any album which would really push Polish jazz forward in any way. On the other hand he played a lot of very high quality music, keeping untouched his language as he developed it in late 70ties and 80ties. In fact he even perfected it by inviting, as one of the first in our country, significant foreign musicians to play with. Names like Eddie Henderson, Art Farmer or John Abercrombie could be mentioned here. One of those special guests I appreciate the most is the one present on this album, legendary avantgarde drummer, Idris Muhammad.

Idris Muhammad was born as Leo Morris but as many Amercian jazz musicians in 60ties decided to convert to Islam as a protest against political oppression of Black people in the US (that is at least how he saw it then). What interests us more is that he established fruitful cooperation with one of the most astonishing musician in history of jazz, and one of the most underestimated, that is with pianist Ahmad Jamal. But he played also with Andrew Hill, Pharoah Sanders and Kamal Abdul-Alim to name some of avantgarde jazz projects in which I like him the most. What is important as far as this recording is concerned he was also invited to rhythm sections by legendary jazz guitarists: George Benson and Grant Green. He is supported here on double bass by Andrzej Cudzich who was incredibly talented Polish virtuoso of this instrument who unfortunately died prematurely.

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Śmietana uses well stellar support he gets as much from Muhammad as from Cudzich. His play is relaxed, articulation perfect, phrasing light as feather yet incredible expressive. His own composition are no worse than great tunes written by Charlie Parker, Jack DeJohnette, John Scofield, Sam Rivers and... Ornette Coleman. This last one perhaps being the influence of Muhammad as Śmietana rather dislike experimenting in jazz keeping mostly to mainstream. But it doesn't matter really! The playing is awesome, the program captivating, the mood high and I simply must admit that it is not only one of the best Jarek Śmietana recordings I heard but also one of the best guitar jazz albums in Polish jazz history. ---Maciej Nowotny, polish-jazz.blogspot.com

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