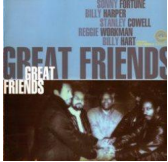


Sonny Fortune - Great Friends (2003)

Written by bluesever

Thursday, 12 September 2013 15:47 -

Sonny Fortune - Great Friends (2003)



01. Cal Massey 03:52 02. Is It Not True Simply Because You Cannot Believe It? 06:48 03. Thoughts 07:11 04. Equipoise 05:11 05. Synapse 10:12 06. East Harlem Nostalgia 08:43 07. Insight 09:53 08. Awakening 10:01 Musicians: Sonny Fortune - alto sax Billy Harper – tenor sax Stanley Cowell – piano Reggie Workman – bass Billy Hart – drums

Great Friends is an artifact. Recorded on July 7, 1986, at Sysmo Studio in Paris, it is the only recorded output of the aggregation that included alto saxophonist Sonny Fortune, tenor saxophonist Billy Harper, Stanley Cowell at the piano, bassist Reggie Workman, and drummer Billy Hart. Until this reissue on the Pennsylvania indie Evidence Music, Great Friends was only available in Europe, on the French label Black & Blue. While led by the bristling tones of Fortune's alto, the recording gives equal time to each musician, allowing its titular egalitarianism to color each of the eight tracks included. Workman's bass solos on Stanley Cowell's "Equipoise" and his own "Synapse," in particular, reveal the clear lines of communication that define this recording. "Equipoise" as a whole is the standout track here; plaintive keys are matched by an urgent, slowly building rhythm that flirts with the saxophone and bass solos, never cresting into the pop crescendo that always seems to lurk just beyond the solo. Billy Harper's "Insight" lets drummer Billy Hart solo for almost a minute before opening up into an incredible interplayed solo between Fortune and Harper. Including as it does some of the fastest playing of the session, "Insight" illustrates the comfortable improvisation between the players. This recording occurred immediately after a European tour, and includes none of the sterility of a studio situation. Fortune, Harper, Cowell, Workman, and Hart hit on all cylinders throughout, often approximating what it must have been like to see these great friends at one of those smoky European clubs. ---Johnny Loftus, Rovi

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