

Chester Thompson – A Joyful Noise (1991)

Written by bluesever

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01 Tropical Sunday 02 So-Soka 03 Homeland 04 Drums Are Loud 05 A Joyful Noise [play](#)
06 Chunky 07 Jussa Thang 08 Cool Groove 09 Raw 10 Additude 11 Amazing Grace [play](#)

Chester Thompson - Arranger, Drums, Drums (Electric), Keyboards, Percussion, Percussion, Programming, Sequencing, Vocal Percussion, Vocals Gerald Albright - Sax (Tenor), Soloist Debra Dobkin - Percussion George Duke - Guest Artist, Soloist, Synthesizer Brandon Fields - Sax (Tenor), Soloist Bruce Fowler - Soloist, Trombone Steve Fowler - Flute, Sax (Alto), Soloist Freddie Fox - Guitar (Electric) Pamela Deuel Hart - Vocals Michiko Hill - Keyboards, Piano, Vocals Pewee Hill - Bass, MIDI Bass, Vocals Harry Kim - Trumpet Jay Leach - Guitar (Acoustic), Guitar (Electric), Pedal Steel, Soloist Yoshio Maki - Vocals Charles Owen - Sax (Tenor) Mike Rosen - Synthesizer Programming Otmaro Ruiz - Arranger, Keyboards, Soloist Wendy Sacks - Vocals Akil Thompson - Drums (Electric), Vocals Roz Clark Thompson - Vocals Kevin Toney - Arranger, Keyboards Ronnie Vann - Guitar (Electric), Vocals Greg Walker - Vocals Brenda White - Vocals Wally Fowler's Tennessee Valley Boys Flugelhorn

JOYFUL NOISE features acclaimed drummer Chester Thompson - who has recorded with Genesis, Frank Zappa and Carlos Santana - includes "Tropical Sunday" and "Raw." Few contemporary jazz drummers attempt to become solo artists, but the ones who have--Alex Acuna, Dave Weckl and Danny Gottlieb, for example--have succeeded quite well. Add Thompson to the list of those who have an amazing knack for melody and who know how to surround themselves with good players. A Joyful Noise is an appropriate title for this disc, which ranks as one of the most pleasurable contemporary jazz players of the early 90s. The energy level is high with the tropical jaunts of the first two cuts and keeps going throughout, climaxing with the R&B licks of "Jussa Thang" and "Cool Groove" before cooling down with a rich and rewarding rendition of "Amazing Grace." A drummer's albums sometimes feature too much "in your face" slamming, but Thompson uses restraint. When the percussive all-skin "Drums are Loud" arrives, therefore, it's an interesting interlude. Only the title cut is a little corny; it's a pretty

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melody, but the choir like vocals seem a bit sentimental. No matter, this is one serious party disc. "Amazing Grace" sums up the spirit of all the joyful noises present. ~ Jonathan Widran

Chester Thompson has one impressive resume. Frank Zappa, Genesis, Carlos Santana, Steve Winwood, Phil Collins, Jaco Pastorius have all been more than ably backed by drummer extrodanair Chester Thompson. One downside to backing so many diverse acts is being able to establish a sound of your own. On A Joyful Noise, Thompson attempts just that, with mixed results. No doubt, he is a skilled percussionist, but playing and writing music are two different things. Some of the tracks on A Joyful Noise are pure jazz joy, "Tropical Sunday", "So-Soka" and "Drums Are Loud" are feel-good, toe tapping cuts that survive repeated listenings. Other tracks lack a definitive sound to be tolerable for more than a few plays - the album ending version of "Amazing Grace", while tastefully done, does nothing to add to the legions of artists that have performed this old standard. I enjoy the album, but was looking for something more that gave spotlight to Thompson's kit prowess. Alas, this is a midde of the road, smooth jazz album that while pleasant enough, is not indicative of the musicianship Thompson has displayed in his previous associations.

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