

Jan Garbarek – Afric Pepperbird (1970)

Written by bluesever

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01. Skarabee 02. Mah-Jong 03. Beast of Kommodo 04. Blow Away Zone 05. MYB 06. Concentus 07. Afric Pepperbird 08. Blupp
Jan Garbarek – tenor saxophone, bass saxophone, clarinet, flute, percussion
Terje Rypdal- guitar, bugle
Arild Andersen – bass, thumb piano, xylophone
Jon Christensen – percussion

Long ago, before he achieved relative stardom with his Nordic, somewhat new-agey recreations of medieval music, Jan Garbarek produced a handful of spectacular, robust albums for ECM where the influence of free jazz, particularly Albert Ayler, was paramount. Afric Pepperbird was his first recording for the then fledgling label and it features his quartet at the height of their powers, embellishing his muscular and imaginative compositions with outstanding, individualistic playing. From the eerie keening of the opening "Scarabee," framed by Jon Christensen's pinpoint delicate drums, to the hard-driving "Beast of Kommodo" with the leaders wailing bass sax to Rypdal's manic explorations on Blow Away Zone, this is one stellar effort. Add to that three drop-dead gorgeous miniatures by the great and undersung bassist Arild Andersen and the title track, one of the most deliriously infectious melodies you'll ever hear. Together with Sart, Tryptikon, and Witchi-Tai-To (as well as a prior recording on Flying Dutchman), this album represents the strongest, most aggressive portion of Garbarek's career, before he succumbed to what became known as the ECM aesthetic. Very highly recommended. ---Brian Olewnick, Rovi

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