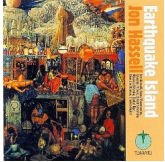


Jon Hassell - Earthquake Island (1979)

Written by bluesever

Saturday, 08 May 2010 12:26 - Last Updated Saturday, 27 December 2014 14:05

Jon Hassell - Earthquake Island (1979)



01. *Voodoo Wind* - 9:36
02. *Cobra Moon* - 4:54
03. *Sundown Dance* - 4:52
04. *Earthquake Island* - 10:16
05. *Tribal Secret* - 3:50
06. *Baliá* - 4:36
07. *Adiòs, Saturn* - 1:55

Personnel:

- Jon Hassell - trumpet (01-04,06,07), Arpstrings (01-05), Polymoog (02-04)
- Nana Vasconcelos - drums, percussion, cuica, congas, berimbau, handclaps, voice (01,02,06,07)
- Miroslav Vitous - bass (02-04,06)
- Claudio Ferreira - bass (01,07), guitar (01-04,06,07), handclaps
- Ricardo Silveira - guitar (02,03,06)
- Badal Roy - tabla (02-06)
- Dom Um Romao - percussion (02-04,06)
- Clarice Taylor - vocals (01,03,07)
- Erasto Vasconcelos, Haroldo Mauro Jr. – handclaps

Earthquake Island was Hassell's first project supported by a traditional lineup -- two guitarists, a bassist, and several percussionists. Rhythms from Latin American and the Caribbean appear for the only time (so far) in this world citizen's recordings, and on a couple of tracks there's even a guest vocalist named Clarice Taylor. Earthquake Island is also the artist's least discussed album. Okay, make that undiscussed -- even on websites devoted to Hassell's music, it only gets a sentence or two. In hindsight, this album seemed like a backward step compared to the electronic drones and hand percussion of Vernal Equinox, and was perhaps taken as a thin example of the late-'70s jazz fusion taste for Latin percussion and horn arrangements (cf.

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Santana; the 1979 debut by Irakere). Certainly the participation of Weather Report vets like bassist Miroslav Vitous and percussionist Dom Um Romeo promised a bit of that band's shine with jazz reviewers and fans. This is too bad, because a nice, unusually direct collection of tunes has gone overlooked. Certainly, the Moog and Arp synthesizers date the music. They provide nice harmonic guidelines without getting slippery, but are a little slick; Vitous' bass and the guitars of Claudio Ferreira and Ricardo Silveira don't use electronic effects, so they don't match Hassell's brass textures. But they all, Um Romeo, Nana Vasconcelos, and Pakistan tabla master Badal Roy, create a bottom far earthier than the experimental percussion textures of Dream Theory in Malaysia or the overworked, undermelodic funk rock of City: Works of Fiction, especially the touches of samba. Where Hassell's trumpet effects and stylings tend to swell up and even loom over his keyboards and rhythm sections on his finest albums, this time the melodies keep him playing closer to the treetops.

The fun parts catch Hassell using his horn to make sounds that, in other hands, would drive high school band directors to chain-smoke. Under the string synthesizer of "Tribal Secrets," he creates a two-note riff by inhaling through the trumpet; sucks a kissing tone on "Voodoo Wind," and everywhere he leans close to the microphone for a solo and relaxes his embouchure so air can stream around the mouthpiece. The closer, "Adios Saturn," is a particularly gratifying slice of cheese. Hassell cops from easy listening icon Ray Conniff and plays a snake-like melody in unison with Taylor over modulations taken from the opening track. ---John Young, Rovi

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