

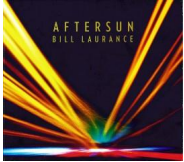
## Bill Laurance - Aftersun (2016)

Written by bluesever

Wednesday, 20 June 2018 15:05 -

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## Bill Laurance - Aftersun (2016)



1 *Soti* 2 *The Pines* 3 *Time To Run* 4 *Madeleine* 5 *Bullet* 6 *Aftersun* 7 *First Light* 8 *Golden Hour* 9 *A Blaze* Bill Laurance - Piano, Electric Piano [Fender Rhodes], Clavinet, Keyboards [Prophet 8, Moog Voyager, Roli Seaboard, Korg MS2000], Mellotron, Organ [Hammond], Percussion Robert "Sput" Searight - Drums, Percussion, Bass [Moog], Organ [Hammond] Michael League - Electric Bass, Bass [Upright], Bass [Moog] Weedie Braimah - Percussion

Snarky Puppy pianist Bill Laurance has let the solo persona he introduced on painterly and cinematic journeys such as 2014's *Flint* and last year's *Swift* off the leash with *Aftersun*. It's an uninhibited jam on more succinct materials, featuring his Snarky Puppy rhythm-section partners Michael League and Robert Searight and the exciting St Louis-based Ghanaian Weedie Braimah, whose hand drums provide fireworks that light up the set. There's a contemporary *Headhunters* feel in the wah-wah sounds and choppy time swaps of the opening *Soti*, while the gentle piano hook of *The Pines* invokes Robert Glasper – and a fast rhythmic undertow, contrasting with the languid theme, sets a creative pattern often revisited on the session. The flute-like theme and African drums sound of *Bullet* have a ritualistic grip; the title track is a brooding anthem; *A Blaze* is an irresistible hook with a Caribbean feel. For all its sense of players' freedom, though – and some flying piano breaks from the leader – *Aftersun* might still have too smooth a sheen for some jazzers, but there's no doubting Laurance's creativity as a very unusual kind of world musician. ---John Fordham, [theguardian.com](http://theguardian.com)

This is a welcome and highly impressive new release from the Brooklyn based former leader of the Grammy Award winning Snarky Puppy, two of his former colleagues and the highly accomplished percussion master Weedie Braimah. Recorded at The Parlor Studios in New

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Orleans the nine titles here are in essence forward looking in outlook, but also pay homage to the great genre breaking bands of the past, such as Herbie Hancock's Headhunters and John McLaughlin's Mahavishnu Orchestra. There is a refreshing authoritative twenty first century feeling about the Bill Laurance multi keyboard technique, as those who attended his performance at last year's Love Supreme Festival will have witnessed. The group interplay and empathy throughout this album is of the highest order and all the compositions have freshness and originality having all been composed by band members.

Some tracks such as the opener "Soti", the funk like "A Blaze" and "Bullet" lay down a mood or create an atmosphere rather than state a theme for development and exploration. These tracks draw the listener in and retain attention due to the quality of the compositions and high standard of musicianship involved. A multi layered sound is employed on the title track "Aftersun" where the haunting theme has electric piano out front over keyboards and subdued percussion. The three semi acoustic tracks where the leader displays his considerable piano skills, are the album highlights. "The Pines" has a reflective blues feel about it, "Madeline" has a strong melody from the piano which floats over an almost rock like back beat from the drums and orchestral programming and the highly evocative "Golden Hour" has a compelling theme superbly delivered.

Having just completed a UK tour with four nights at Ronnie Scotts, the band now have concerts in Boston, Chicago, St Louis and Santa Monica before recording sessions for two more albums promised for release later this year. This recording is a great buy for both dedicated fans and newcomers to this music on either side of the Atlantic. ---Jim Burlong, jazzviews.net

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