

Noel Pointer – Hold On (1978)

Wpisany przez bluesever
Czwartek, 15 Luty 2018 14:58 -

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1. *Hold On* 2. *Stardust Lady* - 3. *Roots Suite: a. Introduction & Pastorale b. Mama Aifambeni c. Oluwa (Many Rains Ago)* - 4. *Superwoman (Where Were You When I Needed You?)* 5. *Staying With You* 6. *Movin' In* 7. *Capriccio Stravagante* Backing Vocals – Gwen Guthrie (tracks: A1, A3.a to B2), Lani Groves (tracks: B1, B2), Patti Austin (tracks: A1, A3.a to B2), Vivian Cherry (tracks: A1) Drums – Steve Gadd (tracks: A1 to B4) Electric Bass – Anthony Jackson (tracks: A2, A3.a to B2, B4), Francisco Centeno (tracks: A1, A3.a to A3.c, B3) Electric Guitar – Eric Gale (tracks: A1 to B2, B4) Piano, Synthesizer - Dave Grusin Percussion – Ralph MacDonald (tracks: A1, B1, B2, B4) Violin [Electric] – Noel Pointer (tracks: A1, A3.a to B1, B3, B4)

The LP *Phantazia* was followed in 1978 by *Hold On*, an album which was still funky but which differed from its predecessor with the use of a bevy of vocalists, including Patti Austin. They chant the words of the title-track, an old gospel song. Noel Pointer even sings on *Stardust Lady*. He has a pleasantly innocent voice, although the song itself is rather slushy. He also sings on Patti Austin's composition *Staying With You*, sounding a bit like Neil Sedaka.

The three-part *Roots Suite* interprets some of the music that Quincy Jones, Dave Grusin and South African composer Caiphus Semenya wrote for the famous television series *Roots*. It captures the African atmosphere of the soundtrack, using chants, the thumb-piano and African-style percussion, with Noel Pointer's violin floating above.

Superwoman is another Stevie Wonder song, where Pointer's violin sounds beautifully ethereal. Pointer's *Movin' In* is a cleverly-structured piece which gives Noel plenty of opportunity to display his virtuosity. *Capriccio Stravagante* is Dave Grusin's arrangement of a piece by the 17th-century Italian composer Carlo Farina. The track begins and ends in stately classical mode with accompaniment from a string quartet, but in between comes an enterprising case of

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"jazzing the classics" which works very well.

Noel Pointer died in 1994, just before he would have been 40. I confess I had only vaguely heard of him but I am very glad to have been introduced to his eclectic abilities on these two LPs, reissued as a double CD. The sound quality is admirable. ---Tony Augarde, musicweb-international.com

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