

Cadence

THE REVIEW OF JAZZ & BLUES: CREATIVE IMPROVISED MUSIC

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1) EARTH PEOPLE, SKY READERS, UNDIVIDED VISION 3.

Magical Flower (Horus the Red Travels Backwards) / It's That Simple. 51:55.

André Martinez, d, balafon, shekeré, djembe, bells, perc; Doug Principato, el g; Jason Candler, as, g, perc; Sabir Mateen, ts, as, flt, cl, a cl; Mark Hennen, p, kybd; François Grillot, b; Firehorse, electron. 4/30/03, New York, NY.

Earth People is a septet performing innovative music on the live recording on (1). Multi-percussionist Martinez sustains a continuous pattern of exotic rhythms on Ghanaian metal balafon and numerous other instruments. He creates a flurry of pulsating patterns around which guitarist Principato wields electrifying guitar elements. Candler and Mateen share the reed duties as dual foils on this aggressive music, while pianist Hennen and bassist Grillot build an undercurrent of consuming tension. Electronics by Firehorse (a.k.a. Steven Nardi) overlay this display of power. The presentation consists of a forty-one minute joint venture into uncharted territory, followed by an eleven-minute excursion of equal forcefulness.

Extreme temperatures permeate the set where collective improvisation and intelligently interwoven interplay prevail. "Magical Flower" unfolds in dynamic layers on which everyone solos simultaneously and everything knits together as a cohesive whole. Principato takes an ambitious position by scorching the earth with blazing guitar fire. Mateen on multiple woodwinds and Candler, who also plays guitar and percussion, hit screech-

ing highs consistent with the upper range of Principato's guitar. Grillot bows his way through the complex maze as Hennen fans the fire with upper-register stabs and bottom-end piano key rumblings. Martinez's arsenal comes into full play throughout the endeavor. At points, the players take a divergent tempo turn, such as when Mateen scales back the pace around the 30-minute mark with a moving tenor solo. The pressure resumes quickly when he and Principato up the ante and everyone scampers emphatically toward the finish line.

"It's That Simple" sustains the momentum generated on the long opening number and reaffirms the collective integrity of this unit. Salvador Dali is quoted on the sleeve: "If you understand your painting before-hand, you might as well not paint it." This aptly describes the musical venture this band takes. They set out for points unknown with no preconceived idea of how to get there, and only when they reach their destination can one begin to appreciate the significance of their travels.

Frank Rubolino