

Mc Hacek: Featuring Ourselves (CD, 50:32);

Think Ed Mann, think Zappa, think vibes, think Holdsworth and Henderson and especially so -- please think pure zany fusion. Alex Machacek is guitars/programming, Tibor Kövesdi is bass/keys, **Flip Philipp is awesome vibes/percussion** and Harri Ganglberger make one seriously talented Austrian jazz fusion band. I hear Dave Samuels' Gallery days and Ed Mann's superb Get Up release. Things are always surprising here with violin, viola, and cello swooning in on "Liebe, Jazz Und Übermut". They even acknowledge this track sounding like an Allan Holdsworth piece on the liner notes but to me it has its own significant character fully apart. Machacek is one firmly talented guitarist, no doubts here. He has his own style even if he echoes Henderson and Holdsworth. Riffs are riffs. For in-your-face Zappa, hear "Zapzarapp". It is one of my fav tracks as it flows in fits and starts then mellows in a ballad format at times like an old Bruford piece. Philipp's vibe unison runs with Machacek's fleeting melody lines was as good if not better than those sax/guitar tricks on Stern's releases or even Gong's unison vibes/axe runs with Holdsworth way back when . . . A solo bass break nicely pulls this piece out into more room for Machacek to squeal harmonics-laden wailings for the outro. To show off all this band's syncopated bells and whistles you must experience, "Donna Lee -- Easy Viennese Version". This reminded me of game show jingles re-written for fusion keeping in mind the whirlwind effects of a manic Magma intro. Truly whacked!! I luv'd it. "Intro 2 7" leads us very Allan Holdsworthic right into "Allandig" which seems a tribute to Holdsworth. It is an 8:53 mellow flowing piece that builds into room for Machacek to do the butterfly-kiss, light-fingered touch, and then open it up for extended jams in fusion heaven with angelic vibes countering his axe's tortured screams and bluesy-rocked fusion runs. The flurry of notes here is wonderfully placed and without any excess. The bassist does an excellent job on piano on this great cut. They outro with a tight drum solo. "Bänderriss" was a perfect blend of Zappa meets Tribal Tech. Hunh? Yep. It worked. It demonstrated just how much fine jazz riffage Machacek can pull out of his sleeve. Bass solo is just right. Compositions shift and flow and this group just breathe the change-ups unfalteringly. A joy to experience. Class stuff here. Last two tracks were free-form improv, avant garde excursions that reminded me of when Tribal Tech just gets weird and whankish. They did little to help this release. In spite of the anti-climax in these last two cuts, I highly recommend this release for superb fusion of Austria. ~

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