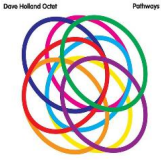


Dave Holland Octet - Pathways (2010)

Written by bluesever

Monday, 02 August 2010 14:19 - Last Updated Wednesday, 03 September 2014 13:55

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- 01 Pathways*
- 02 How's Never?*
- 03 Sea of Marmara*
- 04 Ebb and Flow*
- 05 Blue Jean*
- 06 Wind Dance*
- 07 Shadow Dance*

Musicians:

Dave Holland - bass

Antonio Hart - Alto Sax and
Flute

Chris Potter - Tenor Sax and Soprano Sax

Gary Smulyan - Baritone Sax

Alex "Sasha" Sipiagin - Trumpet & Flugelhorn

Robin Eubanks - Trombone

Steve Nelson - Vibraphone and Marimba

Nate Smith – drums

With five A-list horn players -- Chris Potter on tenor and soprano saxophones, Antonio Hart on alto sax and flute, Gary Smulyan on baritone sax, Alex Sipiagin on trumpet and flügelhorn, and Robin Eubanks on trombone -- on board, and anchoring supplied by Dave Holland's bass, Nate Smith's drums, and Steve Nelson's marimba and vibes, there's a lot of swing residing within these grooves. There is also empathy to spare. Pathways, recorded live at New York's Birdland and the first release by the Holland Octet, is tightly woven, devoid of bloat, and constantly in motion. Holland, in his multi-decade career, has worked within every conceivable format, and he smartly positions the octet precisely where it should be by definition, midway between the standard small-group configuration and the all-bases-covered grandness of a big band. The

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arrangements often seem larger than life while simultaneously feeling succinct, and every solo -- not the least of which are Holland's own masterful excursions -- is carefully considered and masterfully executed. The album's seven tracks are all written by bandmembers -- five by Holland, one each by Sipiagin and Potter -- and two of Holland's, "Shadow Dance" and "How's Never?" (both of which he's recorded before), are the longest of the show, allowing for multiple shifts in mood, tempo, and color. Holland uses those pieces, in particular, as launching pads for dynamic solo exhibits and inspired duets, but in the end it's not the dexterity of the individuals that impresses most, but rather the groupthink of the ensemble. ---Jeff Tamarkin, Rovi

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