

Frank Kimbrough - Rumors (2010)

Written by bluesever

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01. Six 02. TMI 03. Hope 04. Rumors [play](#) 05. Sure As We re Here 06. Forsythia 07. Over 08. For Andrew
Personnel: Frank Kimbrough - piano; Masa Kamaguchi - bass; Jeff Hirshfield - drums.

Timing is everything, whether discussing music, sports or life in general, and this certainly proves to be the case with the recording of Rumors. In September of 2009, jazz photographer and occasional producer Jimmy Katz made a last minute offer to record pianist Frank Kimbrough in a setting of his choice. Kimbrough, having just played with bassist Masa Kamaguchi and drummer Jeff Hirshfield at the Kitano in New York City, yearned to connect with these musicians again before Kamaguchi returned to his home in Barcelona. The timing proved to be perfect and the chemistry between these three musicians is on full display across these eight tracks.

While seven of these pieces come from Kimbrough's pen, the album starts off with "Six," written by Catalan composer Federico Mompou and unfolding with Hirshfield's slow cymbal dance. Kimbrough's delivery shows an uncluttered sense of melodic brilliance, making this an engaging performance. "TMI," no doubt referencing the popular abbreviation for "Too Much Information," betrays Kimbrough's fondness for piano visionaries like Thelonious Monk, Andrew Hill and Herbie Nichols. Quirky, sea-sawing melodic snippets collide as the trio shows off its elastic sense of time. While performing as one interactive entity on this song, "Hope" begins as a showcase for Kimbrough. Kamaguchi and Hirshfield enter this performance with a fragile sense of being, and support Kimbrough during his comforting and consonant travels. Eventually, bass and piano converse and create some touching musical moments.

The title track begins with some slight hints of the Far East. As the music grows, Hirshfield's ride cymbal work becomes more furious and he rains down on the group with a percussive storm.

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Kamaguchi's pulsing, insistent bass presence helps to provide a sense of consistency in these stormy moments. Kimbrough creates a two-handed dance on "Sure As We're Here," with Hirshfield providing some skittering brushwork. "Forsythia"—a plant that often signals the arrival of spring—shows deep, beautiful, organic musical growth. An expansive and open feeling pervades this piece, with Kamaguchi blending well with Kimbrough, and the clear ring of the bass and piano seeming to linger in the air.

"Over," with its spiky, jagged beginning, starts off like a three-way boxing match. Each man jabs and prods with his instrument, but things change when Hirshfield takes over, owning the music until Kamaguchi gets his turn. A shower of notes seems to descend from all places as the piece tumbles toward its conclusion. "For Andrew" is six minutes of solemn, absorbing sound. Sensitivity and reverence travel through this piece, as each musician adds to the emotional impact and flow. This recording session might have been coordinated at the last minute, but it's hard to imagine finer musical conversations being crafted with all the planning time in the world. ---Dan Bilawsky, allaboutjazz.com

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