

## Jeff Lorber - Jeff Lorber Fusion (2014)

Written by bluesever

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01. *Chinese Medicinal Herbs* 02. *Hacienda* 03. *He Had a Hat* 04. *Singaraja* 05. *Montserrat* 06. *Rain Dance* 07. *King Kong* 08. *Solo Jeff / Surreptitions* 09. *Tune 88* Jeff Lorber - keyboards, piano Eric Marienthal - saxophones Jimmy Haslip - bass Sonny Emory – drums Recorded at Blue Note, Milano, March 21, 2014

With a smooth sound bringing together elements of funk, R&B, rock, and electric jazz, keyboardist Jeff Lorber helped pioneer a genre of fusion later formatted under such names as NAC and contemporary jazz. Born in Philadelphia on November 4, 1952, he began playing the piano at the age of four, and as a teen performed with a variety of local R&B bands. Lorber's infatuation with jazz began during his stay at the Berklee College of Music, and after forming the Jeff Lorber Fusion he issued the group's self-titled debut in 1977. During the first half of the following decade, the band became one of the most popular jazz acts of the period, touring nonstop and even scoring a Best R&B Instrumental Grammy nomination for the radio hit "Pacific Coast Highway." Released in 1986, *Private Passion* was Lorber's most successful outing yet, but at this commercial peak he stopped recording, instead turning to production and session work.

He did not issue his first proper solo LP until 1991's *Worth Waiting For*, remaining both a prolific performer and producer for the rest of the decade. He recorded for Verve and Zebra in the '90s before moving over to Narada in the 2000s and releasing successful smooth jazz albums like 2003's *Philly Style* and 2005's *Flipside*. He released *He Had a Hat* on Blue Note in 2007. In 2010, Lorber released the '70s funk and soul-inflected *Heard That*. In 2010, Lorber reactivated the Jeff Lorber Fusion and released *Now Is the Time* via Heads Up International. The album received generally positive reviews, placed high on the contemporary jazz chart, and was nominated for a Grammy.

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Lorber not only stayed with the revitalized JLF format, but went even deeper for 2012's *Galaxy* (Heads Up/Concord), revisiting in depth the sound he helped to pioneer. Lorber, bassist Jimmy Haslip, and saxophonist Eric Marienthal were accompanied by drummer Vinnie Colaiuta. The album also featured guest spots by trumpeter Randy Brecker; percussionist Lenny Castro; guitarists Paul Jackson, Jr., Michael Thompson, Andrée Theander, and Larry Koonse; and drummer Dave Weckl. In August of 2013, the JLF released *Hacienda*. --- Jason Ankeny, Rovi

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