

Alcatraz - Vampire state building (1971/2006)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Simple Headphone Mind* (10:00) 2. *Your Chance of a Lifetime* (5:06) 3. *Where the Wild Things Are* (3:03) 4. *Vampire State Building* (13:10) 5. *Piss Off* (3:18) 6. *Change will come* (6:08)
Ruediger Berghahn – piano, vocals Klaus Holst - guta Klaus Nagurski – flute, tenosr saxophone Ronald 'Ron' Wilson - bass Jan Rieck – drums

This album was a huge surprise for me. It's one of those obscure gems that i'm so glad I took a chance on. ALCATRAZ were fom Hamburg, Germany and originally did covers of bands like VANILLA FUDGE, TEN YEARS AFTER, BLACK SABBATH, URIAH HEEP etc. Over time they decided they didn't want to that anymore as they became more interested in Jazz-Avant-gardists like SOFT MACHINE, COLOSSEUM and TONY WILLIAMS LIFETIME. When they started to compose their own material they united the Jazz and Rock elements. For example in the liner notes it says the band mixed music fragments of Cannonball Adderley with influences of DEEP PURPLE. I didn't hear any of the latters sound here but I love the way they combine the Jazz with the raw guitar. This band refused to compromise back then with promoters, managers, record lables whatever. It was their way or no way, their music would be played and recorded the way they wanted. You can hear their thoughts about that in the lyrics of the second track. Anyway they played live with bands such as BIRTH CONTROL, IKARUS, NEU !, JANE and many others.

"Simple Headphone Mind" is one of my favourite all-time tracks. It reminds me so much of that NUCLEUS song called "Torrid Zone". It took me a long time to figure out what song it sounded like but that's it. It opens with drums which are joined by piano, bass and flute. This is classic Jazz , it sounds so good. Then after 2 minutes the guitar comes in changing the mood completely. This is just as good only different. These contrasts continue. The tasteful guitar 5 1/2 minutes in reminds me of Santana, sax follows. Bongos come in late. Amazing tune. "Your Chance Of A Lifetime" has lyrics which talk about the lies bands are told about becoming rich and famous by managers and record labels who in reality care nothing for them personally, in fact they're just using them for their own gain. The drums and guitar sound great early then sax

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joins in around a minute replacing the guitar. Incredible sound here. The guitar is back lighting it up 2 1/2 minutes in to the end.

"Vampire State Building" has a good beat as sax joins in. Nice bass and drum work before 1 1/2 minutes. Guitar arrives a minute later. Drum solo 3 minutes in. Piano after 4 minutes with a different soundscape. It turns psychedelic with flute 6 1/2 minutes in. Jazzy a minute later with guitar and flute as vocals also join in. The tempo picks up 12 minutes in, then sax joins in. "Piss Off" is a good title for the "in your face" guitar and drums early on. The sax and flute start to trade solos with the guitar, back and forth with some dissonance as well. Cool song. ---Mellotron Storm, progarchives.com

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