

Aircraft Pyongyang Express Whyman Kooij Caldwell



FMRCD 324



CHRIS CALDWELL Baritone Sax
PETE WYMAN Soprano / Alto Sax
FRANK VAN DER KOOIJ Tenor Sax

AIRKRAFT

Pyongyang Express

This CD is the retrospective recording which was the result of a ten day adventure back in the Spring of 2009. It is a travelogue which combines the trios collective improvisations, Frank Van De Kooijs musical sketches with field samples taken from the streets and state media of the DPRK. (Listen out for the Pyongyang Express, the DPRK national anthem, Arirang, and the most enthusiastic introductions ever).

The music its inspiration from progressive rock, contemporary classical and many references to the European free jazz school, perhaps feint echoes of a previous all British saxophone trio SOS (Surman, Osborne and Skidmore) even spring to mind

Aircraft are a reeds trio featuring Pete Whyman on soprano & alto saxes, Frank Van Der Kooij on tenor sax and Chris Caldwell on bari sax. Although none of these reedsmen are well known, each has been involved in projects that we've listed in the past. Both Whyman and Caldwell are members of the swell Delta Sax Quartet, as well as being involved in other projects on FMR. Frank Van Der Kooij was a member of NDIO, a Dutch/British unit with Hugh Hopper as a member and a CD on Cuneiform.

This disc is the result of a tour that Aircraft took that brought them from Europe, through Beijing and finally into Pyongyang in North Korea. The music draws from collective improvisations, sketches by Vand Der Kooij and samples taken in North Korea. Most of the 19 pieces are relatively short (under five minutes), with the sampled pieces in between the sketches or improvs. The samples are all quite short and set the vibe for next track.

Mr. Van Der Kooij wrote six of the songs here and each of these is rich harmonically and often warm in tone. Hugh Hopper, who passed away in June of 2009, casts a shadow over this session. Hopper collaborated with the Delta Sax Quartet who cover the music by Hugh's former band Soft Machine and Hopper also co-lead a band (NDIO) with the third member of this trio, Mr. Van Der Kooij. There is a song called "Hugh" dedicated to him on this disc as well as a sample of Hugh's loops plus the CD closes with Hopper's "Virtually" from Soft Machine "Third". Most of the music here has poignant, somber and even melodic sound with little or no free or rambunctious playing. It all flows together superbly from one section to the next, not unlike the way all Soft Machine sets always flowed non-stop. -

Bruce Lee Gallanter, Downtown Music Gallery