

## Mp3 The Groovechasers - Dig A Little Deeper



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Laid back soul jazz, funk and Latin with a lot of original touches and an occasional look back at some earlier jazz styles. 8 MP3 Songs JAZZ: Jazz Fusion, JAZZ: Latin Jazz Details: An Interview with Fred Cogger The music is obviously influenced by people like Herbie Hancock, Miles Davis, The Crusaders and so on, but also has it's own quite distinctive sound. How did you achieve that? "Mostly the album is a reflection of my own experiences and those of the other guys in the band. I've always been pretty open - minded about jazz and over the years I've played just about everything from New Orleans and mainstream thru to soul jazz, funk and fusion. I've also played in quite a few blues and rock bands. So all of that stuff is in there somewhere. On this album I've also tried to cross some boundaries and combine ideas from different styles of jazz." Can you give some examples? "OK, one example would be the horn parts where I've tended to use countermelodies rather than more conventional parallel harmonies. This gives a looser, almost improvised, feel to the written parts and hints at the collective improvisation of the original New Orleans bands. Another example is on "Move Over Mr B" where we use a "modern" time signature - 7/8 - but rather than making it obvious, like Dave Brubeck does, we make it swing, especially on the solos, so it doesn't actually sound like 7/8." Tell me a bit about the people who have influenced you. "Going way back, my first hero was Sidney Bechet. He played with such excitement and passion that I just had to go out and buy a soprano sax and try to copy him. When the band I was in got into a more mainstream thing, I changed to alto and became a bit of a Johnny Hodges clone. Then, in the early sixties, I found myself in a band that was doing a whole range of stuff from Duke Ellington to Cannonball Adderley plus a lot of JoeTurner/Jimmy Rushing type blues. It was a great time with jazz, blues and rock musicians getting together and breaking down musical barriers, and that eventually triggered off the whole jazz-rock thing. From then on I always had a very open-minded approach and tried to develop a

style that would fit in equally well with jazz, blues or rock." You seem to have quite a different approach to the two horns is that deliberate? "It's not a conscious thing. I think it's because I've played a lot more alto than tenor and in fact only started playing tenor seriously for this album. So my style on alto has had a long time to mature while my tenor playing is still developing. On alto there's probably an unlikely mixture of Sidney Bechet, Johnny Hodges and Dave Sanborn although in more recent years, I've been influenced as much by guitarists as saxophonists. On tenor, Wayne Shorter and Wilton Felder have both had a big influence and also one of the older guys, Red Holloway. Despite being in his late seventies, his playing is totally undated and I particularly like the way his sound fits so naturally into both blues and jazz." What made you decide to make the album at this time? "Over the years I've done quite a lot of writing for the various bands that I've been in, but that was mostly doing arrangements of existing numbers. I'd always had a lot ideas at the back of my mind for something more original but the time and opportunity never seemed to be there. Then a few years ago a lot of things came together. I found myself with some free time and a new sequencer program on my computer, and then the Internet and MP3 thing was starting to take off so it just seemed that the time was right." I believe that, as well as being successful on the Internet, the album has been played on a number of jazz radio stations both in the States and elsewhere? "Yeah, the reception generally has been quite exciting. We've been played on quite a few jazz programs, in particular "The Upper Room with Joe Kelly" which broadcasts out of Fairfield in Connecticut. The producer, Gi Dussault, heard us on Cdbaby.com, liked the album and has been playing tracks regularly ever since. We've also been featured on a Canadian program - Duke Radio. And talking about the net, were regularly in the top 40 of the old MP3jazz chart and have even been at No 2 - just behind Nora Jones!" Considering that The Groovechasers were virtually unknown before this album, why do you think it has done so well? "Well, in fact The Groovechasers were completely unknown because we only got together originally to do the album! Since then we've kept it together and have been doing some really enjoyable live gigs. As to why it's doing so well, I think it's because it is a good album and it does feature some very talented musicians. In the past, of course, that would not have been enough because the music industry was totally controlled by the major record labels who were only ever interested in jazz musicians when they're already famous (or dead!). Today any artist can record a CD in an independent studio, release it on the internet, and be heard all over the world, completely by - passing the "suits" in the record business, and that's just what we've done. Of course you still have to work hard at promoting your

CD and it won't get anywhere unless it's a good album in the first place."

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