

Mp3 Russell Jennison - Jazz: Acid Jazz



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FunkJazz based catchy tunes with a solid melodically lyrical injection. A summed collective of funk from the simply sly, to the hardcore herbie and pensive prince with one common link: Diverse and accessible melodies and lyrics. 10 MP3 Songs JAZZ: Acid Jazz, ELECTRONIC: Funk Details: The story of Russell Jennison is living proof that talent is both bread and born. As a child, Russell was hardly ever subjected to the off the cuff 80's music surrounding him. His parent groupings never hit seekers, were still attached to earlier era's and the golden music of the 70's. A strict diet of Abba, the Carpenters, Michael Jackson, Fleetwood Mac, and Dan Fogelburg among many other progressive artists hit his ears with wonder as he sat in the backseat booster on numerous car trips. At 9, driven by some inner urge, Russell asked for piano lessons over the traditional sports route of so many young Canadians. That interest weaned several times during the classical formative years, but interest solidified after joining the Toronto All Star Big Band at 16. Instrumental composition and improv had already begun as minor hobbies prior to the new group, but these blossomed with all the new influences from other band members. Metal and hard rock was soon supplemented with jazz in its many forms, reggae and R&B. Russell recalls vividly his first encounter with Miles' 'kind of blue' in the lakeshore home of trombone legend Al Kay: "it hit me like a bolt of lightening. The sounds from every instrument... every note were so intense.. I had never heard s**t like that before" Russell had no idea of the iconic status of this record. It was this kind of earnest revelation that would pivot the course changes of his musical life. After playing beaches jazz fest on two occasions, breakfast television (CITYTV), the Canadian Ex, among other gigs, Russell quit the group at the outset of another school year and started his own group with fellow colleagues Ryan Chapman and Charles Lewis. Russell's composing blossomed instrumentally, heading in a decidedly funk direction to match the groups model: early 70's Herbie Hancock. This new passion built a solid funk base, further broadened by James

Brown, Sly Stone, Pocket Dwellers, Jamiroquai and many other artists. The small combo, called Groovology, went on to compete at Musicfest Canada, receiving a gold standing at the national finals. Two of the three compositions belonged to Russell, with the third also bearing his arrangement. In addition Russell received an honor award for his conducting, playing, and composing. Who was to provide the after-performance critique and jam session but the legendary Canadian tenor saxophonist, Pat Labarbara. Russell received a much appreciated boost of confidence when Pat praised his compositional development: "Pat told me to stick with my non-conventional, self taught style, and not get a jazz piano coach..." says Russell "...I'll never forget that, it was a turning point for me, and it really screamed 'be an individual' to me... well Pat. It worked!" Indeed it did. Fueled by the fire injected with new university colleagues, Russell's composition and playing hit new peaks early in university. Russell composed on two fronts: Jazz/funk/instrumental and pop/vocal. Two contrasting fronts at that. The first fueled by his love of improvisational musics, the second by his need for lyrical expression, and the explosion that was his first listen to Ben Folds Five: "I had never imagined music like Ben Folds. Piano was always cutesy, even when it wasn't. That's why I had turned to the rhodes originally. It could grunt and snort. Its timbre changed your mind, which changed your improv. Ben Folds brought me back to piano to write. His piano could scream the way no voice could." Even through this influence, Russell's piano pop stayed fairly mellow, and rooted in jazzier chording for years. Five years later, the aural split personality has become clear. Russell's funk shows small wisps of pop sensibility while his pop shows but an aura of jazz and funk: "I had a different brain going for each type of writing. Its just like me, being a typical male, to be able to focus like that" The main addition to jazz that his pop brain infused was lyrics: "my melodies stay rooted in funky jazz, but the lyrics are accessible. I don't have to resort to too-muchery for the funk lyrics because I've developed the skill in pop.. you know??... I'll let you in on a secret.. my second album is going to be the live instrumental type, bringing back all my best instrumental compositions, but I was on a lyrical binge when I did this one (self titled) and so that's the way it went.. not that it isn't soaked with improv, because it is." Russell had the opportunity to pick up his Fender Rhodes piano after winning a high school scholarship: "I figured what better form of higher education could the funds go to? I found this guy in Rhode island (chuckles) not that rhodes are made there or anything. I remember him saying in his accent on the phone: 'I didn't realize these things didn't sound like a real piano when I bought it. Its for my daughter to do lessons on' what a joke!" Although the Fender Rhodes

was originally intended to be a teaching tool, its use in popular music showed its true calling. A unique timbre for a unique era, or was it?? The Rhodes kept in high musical circulation through the 80's, 90's and beyond: "it was the catalyst for this project. Its sound is all over the work, and the lines and progressions were written with that timbre in mind." The 140lb beast made in 1975 was Russell's primary instrument through his 2nd band's early university years. That band remains unnamed and saw the likes of trombone, sax, and trumpet players, as well as two guitarists. Ultimately the band was paired down to a threesome, called 'Fillet of Soul', two years and two studio sessions after its inception. Adam Starling provided a sparse welcome compliment to the frenetic style of Neil Brun on bass, whom Russell is still working with into the future: "I remember this trombonist I played with telling me he knew this bassist who could 'kinda slap'.. He couldn't have been farther from the truth" Neil, in Russell's opinion, as well as anyone else who he has crossed paths with, is by all means a musical prodigy. Russell counts himself lucky having played with Neil to this point, and into the future: "I just had to feature him as much as tastefully possible on the album (self titled). This guy screams professional, but on the edge of perfect control of his instrument. It's that kind of balance that says he's human, but outrageously space cadet so" That is a compliment, and deservedly so. Check out the work of the 'master basser' on 'Superfoxified' "This album was written on love angst while I could still have it. I'm engaged now, so this was a moment, or a long period I guess, and it's only about one girl. It happens to people, it's about the one you think is perfect, but really she was just higher than all the others you'd ever met barring one problem, she wasn't in love with you! It's an ultimate life lesson that you can't make someone want you, and it's a tragic one. This album (self titled) was created on napkins at work, on my hand in the car, in my little studio at home, and within the inspiration of the band. It was written as a song cycle with a common theme of the cycle of a relationship. In song order it goes, I've found her, new love, new lust, questioning truths, argument, bitterness, wanting it back, the futility of the dating scene (again), waiting and hanging on memories, and finally, nothingness. Drop the needle and let the story unfold..." We will Russell.. We will. Francis Newman, 2005

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