



Aapo Heinonen Quintet

Tara



No Fear of Failure

For music to really get exciting, Aapo Heinonen is convinced, you need to be fearless. Tara sees him at his most courageous. For his third record, the Finnish keyboard virtuoso has created a refreshingly unique sound, a relaxed whirlwind of fusion-grooves, Latin swing and modal-jazz-melodies – all embedded into stimulatingly complex arrangements. The album still displays Heinonen's recognizable sensual charm. But it feels a lot more cinematic and ambitious than any of his previous offerings. Heinonen admits he had doubts whether he was ready for these incisive changes. But true to his convictions, he never let that stop him.

To arrive at this point, Heinonen has completely turned his quintet upside down. Drummer Tomi Saikkonen is the only remainder of the original line-up which already recorded two stunning albums filled with soulful 70s-references. Whereas these were built around the concept of a 'five man big band', the new material conversely expands far more intimate material to a quintet setting. Recorded on a single hot Summer weekend and under the hallucinatory influence of a flu infection, Tara sports a dense, intoxicating sound, offering plenty of freedom to all participants.

Take Héctor Lepe's guitar solo on "The Truth of Another", for example. Rising from a hypnotic backing track, it lifts into dreamlike spheres resonating with the blues, progressive rock and cosmic jazz. The other pieces, too, draw similarly exciting effects from the familiar tropes of theme, solo and variation, engaging in a perpetual ebb and tide of light and shadow, tension and release. And as if that weren't enough, the band add even more color to their palette on the ten-minute title track with the inclusion of additional percussion and violin. As with some of the other cuts, the piece was originally written for a different group, lending an air of subtle suspense to the quintet version.

Heinonen is the first to admit that these radical changes could just as well have backfired on him. But he had to see them through at any cost: "The important thing is to eliminate your doubts. There's only one thing I'd consider as a failure: To not even try."