



Pure Pleasure SES-19754

Billy Parker's Fourth World: Freedom Of Speech

Format: 1LP 180g 33rpm / gatefold sleeve Release date: 15.11.2017

Manufacturer: Pure Pleasure Original label: Strata-East Genre: Jazz

Most of the musicians who gathered to record this fantastic spiritual jazz record for the Strata-East label on May 24th, 1974 had crossed each other's paths in various musical pairings over the preceding few years. Husband and wife team Dee Dee Bridgewater (vocals) and Cecil Bridgewater (trumpet) had been working together on albums like Frank Foster's "Loud Minority", and Roy Ayers' "Coffy" and "Virgo Red". Ten weeks before the "Freedom Of Speech" session, the couple had been joined in Tokyo by Cecil's brother Ronald Bridgewater (tenor saxophone) to record Dee Dee's debut album, the beautiful "Afro Blue". Also in the studio on May 24th, 1974 was Donald Smith, (piano, vocals), fresh from recording on his older brother Lonnie Liston Smith's "Cosmic Funk" - on which Ronald Bridgewater had also played percussion. Cecil McBee (bass) was also there - just two weeks before, he'd completed his own Strata East date "Mutima", and in February he'd played on Mtume's "Rebirth Cycle" - with both albums also featuring Dee Dee Bridgewater on vocals. He'd also played on Lonnie Liston Smith's "Astral Travelling". So 1974 was a huge year for all five of these people. Donald Smith and Cecil McBee were six months away from recording on Lonnie Liston Smith's massive "Expansions", with McBee fitting in a few Pharoah Sanders albums in between. AND THEN, THE MYSTERY ... So with all this fervent activity, the question has to be asked ...Who was Billy Earl Parker Jr (drums), the leader of this session? Billy Parker remains unlisted as a musician on all major jazz sites. His only other recording appears to be as a percussionist on Charles Tolliver's "Impact" in 1975. Then there's nothing ...

"Freedom Of Speech" - Billy Parker (dr); Cecil McBee (b, v); Donald Smith (p, voc); Dee Dee Bridgewater (voc); Ronald Bridgewater (ts); Cecil Bridgewater (tp)