



PRESS RELEASE



BILLY COBHAM | COLIN TOWNS | HR-BIGBAND Meeting Of The Spirits

IOR CD 77086-2



1. HOPE 1:44
2. BIRDS OF FIRE 6:23
3. MILES BEYOND 4:40
4. RESOLUTION 4:18
5. COSMIC STRUT 3:42
6. DAWN 9:08
7. ETERNITY'S BREATH 1 & 2 7:01
8. SANCTUARY 10:29
9. CELESTIAL TERRESTRIAL COMMUTERS 3:18
10. YOU KNOW, YOU KNOW 5:19
11. ONE WORD 11:56
12. MEETING OF THE SPIRITS 8:28

Heinz Dieter Sauerborn as, fl; Oliver Leicht as, ss, fl; Harry Petersen ts, cl, fl;
Johannes Enders ts, ss, fl; Rainer Heute bs, bcl;
Tobias Weidinger, Martin Auer, Thomas Vogel, Axel Schlosser trp/flgh;
Günter Bollmann, Peter Feil, Christian Jaksjö trb; Manfred Honetschläger btrb;
Martin Scales g; Peter Reiter p, fender rhodes, keyb;
Thomas Heidepriem e-b; Billy Cobham dr;

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(in & out records / in-akustik)

In the earlier days of my career, I was, and still am, a great fan of Thelonious Monk. One day I found a recording of his music transcribed for big band. This was a milestone recording for me since I grew up listening to big bands, but always played in small groups, and to hear Thelonious' music in this way was revolutionary. Today I have been granted the same honor by the hr-Bigband and my old colleague from those marvelous times, Billy Cobham. I would have never imagined these particular compositions being played by a big band, but in a way you have made a dream come true!

*Very special thanks!!!
John McLaughlin*

Of course the idea was unusual. Nobody has ever dared to arrange the music of John McLaughlin's Mahavishnu Orchestra for a big band before. Perhaps the contrast between the sounds of a guitar-orientated fusion band and a brass-dominated big band seemed too great. I realized quite quickly that a project like this would fail without the right personnel. In fact, the basis for the plan's success already existed: the Hessische Rundfunk Big Band, which has never been shy to experiment and has the soloists and ensemble to perform at the highest level, and, of course, John McLaughlin's fantastic compositions.

Only an arranger with a desire to break boundaries and seek out new challenges for his work could manage the task. The British arranger and composer Colin Towns was my first choice from the start. He embodies the project's fusion idea like no other. I was very pleased he was excited about the idea and that I managed to win him over very quickly. The results of his work are breathtaking! Colin Towns has managed to retain the wild energy, breakneck virtuosity and Indian-inspired mysticism of the original music while also taking it to a new level by merging and enriching it with the orchestral possibilities of a large ensemble. His use of tonal colour is highly effective, underlining his masterful

sense of dramatic tone and form.

And then we have Billy Cobham. What can be said about him that has not been said long before? This master drummer, jazz legend and founder member of the Mahavishnu Orchestra is naturally predestined to add rhythmic authenticity and drive to the project. It is easy to see what an essential role drummers and percussionists have played in the music of John McLaughlin ever since. The guitarist has always performed with the most important, seminal masters of the art, including Tony Williams, Billy Cobham, Zakir Hussain, Narada Michael Walden, Trilok Gurtu and Dennis Chambers, to name but a few. Then as now, rhythm is a pivotal element of all of McLaughlin's music so it seemed more than appropriate to invite Billy Cobham to join the project. And what a good idea it was! Billy Cobham gives the project his unmistakable voice and constantly underlines the melodic richness of his playing.

Olaf Stötzler

"There are easier exercises than transforming songs into a big band context which formerly have been created for smaller line-ups. The hr-Big Band under the direction of English sound magician Colin Towns succeeds in catching the explosive spirituality of John McLaughlin's Mahavishnu Orchestra with their heart and soul. Towns, who in the 1970s played keyboard for the Ian Gillan Band and just has finished to orchestrate Frank Zappa's work, is capable of incorporating the spirit of the Seventies without losing energy into the perception of the new millennium. With drummer Billy Cobham and violin player Jerry Goodman, motor and one of the leading musicians of the original Mahavishnu Orchestra, the project has to its disposal two authorities for this difficult task. "Birds of Fire – a Celebration of the Mahavishnu Orchestra" is a vivid piece of "music history acquisition" being able to deal without nostalgia and false admiration of heroes." (cousy: Jazzfest Berlin magazine)