

Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

FourPlay

Between The Sheets is the second album from FourPlay, the first name in contemporary jazz.

And, while we are playing with numbers, it should be noted that Fourplay's eponymously-titled 1991 debut album on Warner Bros. Records spent a record-setting thirty-three weeks at number one on Billboard's contemporary jazz charts and reached number two on the R&B chart. That's an accomplishment as impressive as Fourplay's R.I.A.A. gold-certification for sales in excess of a half million units, a feat rare in jazz circles and virtually unheard of for a first album from a new band.

New, that it is, but hardly unknown. Fourplay's line-up is impressive:

Keyboardist/producer/composer Bob James has racked up an astonishing run of Grammys, gold albums and ground break-

ing music advances in a career that spans four decades.

Guitarist/producer/composer Lee Ritenour has been nominated for ten Grammys. His twentieth solo album, *Wes Bound*, released this year, was once again a hit, landing in the number one position on every jazz and NAC chart in the country.

Drummer Harvey Mason has likewise garnered an impressive number of Grammy nominations and a mantle full of awards, including three Most Valuable Player trophies from NARAS.

Bassist Nathan East has recorded and co-written dozens of chart-topping hits for everyone from Phil Collins and Eric Clapton to Michale Jackson and Barbara Streisand.

Here are four musicians with nearly a century of collective musical experience between them, scores of A-list credits and an international following that numbers in the millions.

But, for Fourplay, what's always mattered most is the one thing that can not be quantified. It is the music...and the proof can be heard on *Between The Sheets*.

Produced by Fourplay. *Between The Sheets* features eleven new cuts, including the title track, with a vocal duet by Nathan East and special guest Chaka Khan, as well as such standout selections as Neil Hefti's "Li'l Darlin'," the



The "Fourplay" musicians

Bob James-penned "Chant" and Harvey Mason's haunting "Song For Somalia." *Between The Sheets* also showcases Fourplay's consummate craftsmanship and seamless ensemble playing.

Following the 1991 release of *Fourplay*, the quartet took to the road for an international touring slate scheduled around their assorted solo careers. Writing for the new album continued apace, with each member contributing original compositions.

In December of last year, Fourplay embarked on a three-week swing through Japan to experiment with their new material. "Rather than create music in the studio, as we had done with our first album, we wanted to test it out on live audiences," explains Bob James.

Rave reviews and sold out concerts convinced the group that they were doing it right and recording began in earnest earlier this year at L.A.'s Sunset and Pyramid studios. "There was a lot of debate about the various musical decisions," remarks James. "The difference in ideas, styles and backgrounds made for a lively dialogue and fueled our creativity. It's a democratic process; each of us has an equal voice."

Yet, beyond the inevitable give-and-take, there was mutual respect and creative camaraderie that can be clearly heard in the finished product. "We can't wait to get together to perform now" is how James explains it. "The inspiration we got out of the first record really made it easier. We made sure we had the time to get it right.

We had a combination that proved very successful commercially, but beyond that, on a personal level, it exceeded our expectations about how much fun it would be."

Conspicuously absent was the pressure to follow-up a smash debut album. "The first time we were feeling each other out," continues James. "We were seeing how our styles would mix. Now we've had the benefit of the public's positive reaction. We went in the studio with more confidence and emphasized our strengths. Still, we all feel we have a lot left to do musically. We love the process and I think we are setting into our group identity."

It's an identity that has resulted in some of the most original and intriguing new music in recent memory. Along with such

stellar supporting singers as Philip Bailey, Dee Fredrix, Chante Moore and Phil Perry, Fourplay, on *Between The Sheets*, has fashioned an album that deftly delineates new direction, not just for jazz, but for progressive music of every description.

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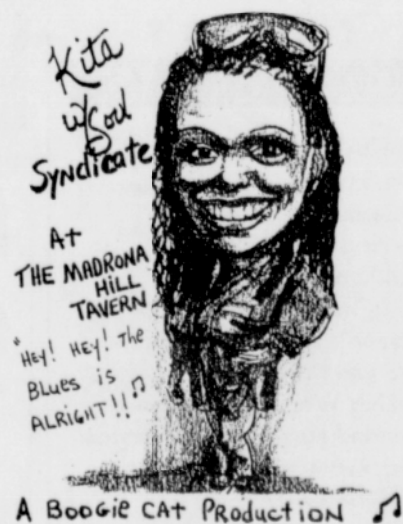
Schedule for October 1993

Sundays, 10, 17, 24, and 31.
Open Jam Session, Kita Host, 5 to 9pm

Wednesdays, 13, 20 and 27.
Open Jam Session, Mel Solomon Host, 8pm to 12am

Thursdays, 14, 21 and 28.
Open Jam Session, Staples Host

9:30pm to 1:30am:
Friday, 8th, Staple Brothers
15th, Kita & Soul
22nd, Mel Solomon
29th, Staple Brothers
Saturday, 2nd
9th, Staple Brothers
16th Kita & Soul
23rd, Mel Solomon
30th, Staple Brothers



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