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ASAF SIRKIS ~ SHEPHERD'S STORIES

PRIVATE EDITION (Barcode: 680569811257) ~ ISRAEL ~ Jazz-Rock Fusion

Recorded: 2012 Released: 2013

This is an excellent album by Israeli (living in London) drummer / composer **Asaf Sirkis**, recorded in a trio format with Greek guitarist **Tassos Spiliotopoulos** and Israeli bassist **Yaron Stavi**, both also living in London. Several guest musicians are featured on selected tracks. The album contains eight original compositions, all written by Sirkis.

Musically the album broadly belongs to the Jazz-Rock Fusion genre, although it also amalgamates other influences, mostly folkloristic and ambient themes. There is a strong presence of melodic elements, most rather melancholic and somewhat mystical, which create an atmosphere of reflection and serenity. And yet the music is full of dynamics and drive, both on the low-key tracks and obviously on the up-tempo numbers.

All these musicians are clearly masters of their trade. Spiliotopoulos plays some incredible licks, which could cause even the most famous guitarists to miss a heartbeat. His flow and apparent virtuosity are especially effective on the up-tempo numbers, where his performances sound similar to those of **Allan Holdsworth**, without any attempt to copy them of course. Stavi is a very

intelligent and proficient bassist, and his solid bass lines serve as the foundation upon all the music is based. He is also beautifully melodic and hassle-free. Sirkis, whom I know since his very early days as a drummer, became a Master of his trade, playing some amazing rhythmic patterns but always emphasizing the melody as well. His rolling technique is simply breathtaking, as is his ability to play forcefully and yet unobtrusively at once is truly sublime.

This is an album for people who love guitar-based instrumental music, but don't expect and razzle-dazzle neck-breaking trickery, ready to enjoy some elegant and meaningful music. This album promises to grow on the listener with time, always uncovering new vistas with every visit.

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