

Airborne – Interview by John Beaudin of Smooth Jazz Now - 2010

Not many groups have stood the test of time like Airborne. Coming in around the time that the NAC format was really starting to cook, since 1988, this outfit grew with every project, gig and album. Having just released their most powerful album yet, New Horizon's, it looks like the world is ready for this, a full dose of positive, social conscious fusion. We sat down with the band to chat about all the twisting, yet beneficial roads taken.

Airborne / Contemporary Jazz / Smooth Jazz & Vocals / World Music

John - Lets' talk about this great new album...It's your seventh, How did you approach this one?

Airborne - Well, this new CD of ours which is our 7th, we approached it from a place of influences from our last 3 CD's. There is always a concept in a Airborne CD and our plan for New Horizons was to keep that Smooth Jazz feel of our 2008 "Winds of Change" CD, but we also wanted that World Fusion sound that was on the 2007 "Turbulence" CD, and to somehow insert the fire of our 2004 "Heavy Vibes" CD that had hot Latin rhythms and R&B vocal arrangements.

So we took all those thoughts and mixed them with some new ideas and came up with the contemporary jazz sound of this 2010 "New Horizons" CD. We are very happy with the way it came out.

John - Tell me about the new single 'Diggin' the Atmosphere

Airborne – Diggin the Atmosphere was composed by Thomas Borino (Piano). It's a feel good tune with a strong groove bearing very pleasing melodic content. As you said John, it lifts you up and takes you to a better place. We call it Jazz in the Sky.

John - feel you hit a nice balance of Jazz and mainstream music, sure it's jazz but you hit a vibe that folks who are new to Jazz would appreciate

Airborne - I think we hit a nice vibe for people who are new to Jazz would like the Airborne sound, because we do put a lot of time and effort into developing a good melody, melody is very important, nothing beats a wonderful melody over a solid groove that is nice to listen to and sticks with you. That combination will always attract people.

The fact that we add as we say air candy vocals to our instrumentals even draws a listening ear. We do have some vocal duets on this CD and in our live performances we always do some R&B Classics that are crowd pleasers that really rock the house.

On this new CD "New Horizons we added two classic R&B Covers, the first time we ever did any cover songs, we added Bobby Hebb's "Sunny" and Billy Holiday's "God Bless the Child".

John - Tell me about the individual songs and give us a story behind it

Airborne – Compositions on New Horizons

Sunrise was the first single for the New Horizons CD. It a nice smooth jazz tune with an inspirational vibe and beautiful melody.

Take me Away is our Cool Island Chill song with its relaxing Caribbean influences. It has a touch of the Airborne's trademark sound of island passion and urban emotion.

Diggin the Atmosphere is our Jazz in the Sky song that lifts you to a better place with melodies that lay over such a great in the pocket groove.

A Saturday Afternoon is a very compassionate contemporary jazz ensemble piece.

Sunny is an Airborne arrangement of a Bobby Hebb tune. New Horizons was the first CD we ever did a cover song. It's classic R&B that heats up a audience.

One World is Salsa Jazz with a Message that is Hot, Vibrant and very Festive. Chanting the message we are One World, One People searching for peace and happiness.

Gate 7 is a magical musical journey taking you onboard to many different places and styles of melodious contemporary jazz.

Thank God it's Friday is very groovy cool jazz. Meet you at Smokey Joe's Café on Friday.

God Bless the Child is Airborne's version of the amazing Billie Holiday composition. We arranged a soulful flavored duet to this unforgettable tune.

From Jazz to James is Contemporary Jazz to Old School Funk. It starts with a jazzy new age feel, to edgy world fusion, and ends with funk influences of James Brown and Tower of Power.

We are all Children of this World is hand clapping and foot stomping Gospel Music with a message. It drives and rocks with a horn section and choir. It is our shout of praise that Airborne is still together and making music for over 22 years.

New Horizons is a Spoken Word piece with an inspirational Message of Hope, Love, and Peace. We inserted many different languages to this international dream.

John - After 7 albums you have seen much change in this format, tell me about that?

Airborne - After 7 Albums we have slightly changed are format for as each day passes by we do grow as Artists and Composers and our music is greatly influenced by the era or space of time we live in that untimely rattles your emotions and effects the way you write and think.

Our first 2 CD's were high energy contemporary jazz a little more raw and edgy and had a very strong fusion background. Our 3rd CD "Lifetones" still had that high energy contemporary jazz sound but introduced the band to a different audience with the addition of a tune called "Island View" which was our first hit smooth jazz single. Then in 2004 we added a percussionist and female vocals which refined and polished are sound a bit.

I would say today the Airborne sound is a balance of keeping the edge and fire of the funk, Latin, and fusion eras with the more refine and polished concept of the smooth jazz format in our compositions yet still staying true musically and challenging ourselves to interesting arrangements of quality and having a open mind to ideas of other cultures.

John - New Horizon's carries on where 'Winds of Change' left off for me, do you feel that way?

Airborne - I would say "New Horizons" carries on the "Winds of Change" music and message, but takes it a bit further into musical development and arrangements. You still get that Smooth Jazz and Latin feel, but the arrangements are a little more complex. It is a little more interesting CD that overlays many different styles to contemporary jazz.

But both CD's does offer that wonderful message of Hope, Peace, and Love

John - Do you guys listen to any Pop?

Airborne - We listen to all styles of music. There is something to learn from every style of music. Either it be the rhythm, melody, ambience, mood, structure, arrangement, vocal, interpretation, and most important the emotion and passion. To be a great

musician or vocalist you must be humble enough to really have an open mind to different ways of doing things. Being closed minded keeps you in a box with no windows stopping you to see the world and what wonders it can offer us.

We always strive to learn and observe what is around us and to incorporate it in our music.

John - Tell me how it started for you, for instance what was the first album you ever bought?

Airborne - I (Thomas Borino) always knew I wanted to be a musician, so as a young lad I had a newspaper route to earn money to buy an organ. I had to sell a lot of newspapers to buy that organ. I then took traditional piano lessons. 3 months after playing I was approached by a band and they wanted me to join the band, but I told them I just started playing, and they said, do you have an organ, I said yes, and they said, you are in the band. So at 14 years old that was my start of a very fulfilling music career.

The first album I bought was by the Young Rascals and my first organ solo I ever learned was the organ solo on their song "Good Lovin".

Music was always in our home, (Greg Borino) the band's always practiced at our house. The whole neighborhood would always gather around our house just to listen to the music and have fun. I started playing guitar at age 10, I then went to ECA, which was a High School for the Performing Arts and then later on I graduated from Berklee College of Music.

John - Do you have an all-time favorite album?

Airborne – (Thomas Borino), I would have to say I have three all-time favorite albums. They are "Light as a Feather" and "My Spanish Heart" by Chick Corea and "Trust" by Herbie Hancock.

(Greg Borino) I would have to say three albums also. They are "Birds of Fire" by the Mahavishu Orchestra, "Welcome" by Santana and "Watercolors" by Pat Metheny.

The Airborne sound is an influence of all these great artists and albums, the Latin of Chick Corea, the Funk of Herbie Hancock, the Rock of Santana, the Fusion of the Mahavishu Orchestra, and the Beautiful Textures of the Pat Metheny Group.

The real concept of a band or ensemble is always present in the music of Airborne. The sharing of ideas and coming up with an original jazz sound that was truly our own was

our goal. It has been said that even with the wide styles of compositions we produce the group still has an identifiable stamp regardless of what and where we adventure into. The days of a band sound is still alive and well and very much appreciated by everyone.

John - Who would you like to work with?

Airborne - I would have to say after 22 years we enjoy working with the Airborne musicians, it has been quite a ride and we love what we do and the creative process. We have a great working relationship and it still is fun.

We do enjoy working with other musicians that's why on all the Airborne CD's there will be many guest artists. Working with other people you learn and grow as a musician and as a person.

We love working with other musicians from all over the world. Just to hear their stories and to hear all these different styles of music is very rewarding.

A quick message to younger musicians: always be humble, open minded, strive for excellence, and create music that is from your heart. You will always then be successful no matter what level your music career takes you.

A point of note: If you would like to know more about Airborne, go to www.airbornejazz.com. Where you can hear music samples, purchase their CD's and downloads, watch videos or just get info on the group and the cause they represent.

Airborne has been proclaimed the Musical Peacemakers of Contemporary Jazz.