The Jazz Crusaders - Happy Again (1995)

1 Lock It Down 4:35 2 When You're So Far Away 5:59 3 Elephant Walk 4:31 4 Top Of The World 6:46 5 Fools Rush In 3:38 6 Are You Part Of Me 5:37 7 Slyzappit 5:44 8 Rock Slide 5:19 9 La Luz Del Dia 5:55 10 Jamaica 3:45 11 Travelin' Inside Your Love 5:24 12 Young Rabbits 3:18 13 Uh-Huh! Oh-Yeah! 5:11 Acoustic Guitar – Peter White (tracks: 6) Alto Saxophone – Wilton Felder (tracks: 9, 10) Bass – Larry Kimpel (tracks: 1 to 11), Nate Phillips (tracks: 8) Bass, Guitar [Guitars] – Johnny Reason (tracks: 8) Drums – N'Dugu Chancler (tracks: 1 to 9, 11), Noel Closson (tracks: 13), Rayford Griffin (tracks: 10, 12) Effects [Percussive Sounds] – Donald Tavie (tracks: 2 to 7, 10, 11) Effects [Percussive Sounds], Written-By – Bobby Caldwell (tracks: 10) Electric Guitar – Craig T. Cooper (tracks: 6) Guitar – Ira Siegel (tracks: 13) Guitar [Guitars] – Craig T. Cooper (tracks: 8 to 10), Dwight Sills (tracks: 11) Keyboards – Bobby Caldwell (tracks: 10), Bobby Lyle (tracks: 1 to 5, 7 to 9, 11, 12) Lead Guitar – Brian Price (2) (tracks: 7), Larry Carlton (tracks: 2 to 4) Organ [Hammond] – Bobby Lyle (tracks: 6) Percussion – Poncho Sanchez (tracks: 10) Rhythm Guitar – Craig T. Cooper (tracks: 1 to 5, 7, 11) Soprano Saxophone – Wilton Felder (tracks: 6) Tenor Saxophone – Wilton Felder (tracks: 1 to 8, 11 to 13) Trombone – Wayne Henderson (tracks: 1 to 8, 10 to 13) Trumpet – Donald Byrd (tracks: 1, 4, 12) Vibraphone [Vibes] – Roy Ayers (tracks: 4, 6, 11) + Backing Vocals – Carol Perri, Darlene Perri, Lori Perri, Sharon Perri Backing Vocals – The Benson Family and Friends Congas, Guiro – Poncho Sanchez Cowbell, Shaker – Ramon Banda Euphonium [Miraphone B-flat Tenor Horn] – Wayne Henderson Flute – Hubert Laws Vocals – Bobby Caldwell, Wayne Henderson

When trombonist/producer Wayne Henderson, pianist/keyboardist Joe Sample, sax-man Wilton Felder, and drummer Stix Hooper changed their name from the Jazz Crusaders to the Crusaders back in 1971, it signaled a more R&B-minded direction for the group -- they were always funky, but in the '70s, they became even funkier. And so, the names the Crusaders and the Jazz Crusaders came to stand for two different things -- if the Jazz Crusaders were synonymous with a funky yet acoustic-oriented approach to hard bop (à la Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers), the Crusaders were about electric-oriented jazz-funk and fusion. In 1995, Henderson (who left the Crusaders in 1975) resurrected the name the Jazz Crusaders and produced Happy Again for the small, Los Angeles-based Sin-drome Records. Sample objected

to Henderson's use of the name the Jazz Crusaders, although Sample and Felder were still part of the Crusaders. Confused? Suffice to say that different improvisers used the two names on different projects in the '90s. On Happy Again, Henderson oversees a lineup that includes Felder as well as trumpeter Donald Byrd, guitarist Larry Carlton, keyboardist Bobby Lyle, vibist Roy Ayers, flutist Hubert Laws, and percussionist Poncho Sanchez (among others). With such an impressive cast, Happy Again should have been exceptional; it isn't, although Henderson does give a generally decent album of electric jazz-funk and pop-jazz. Some might argue that if Henderson was going to resurrect the name the Jazz Crusaders, this album should have been more straight-ahead and bop-oriented and that tracks like "When You're So Far Away" and "Elephant Walk" are too pop-influenced to be called Jazz Crusaders recordings. But while Happy Again is hardly the work of a bop purist, it's still a pleasant, if imperfect, outing, and in 1995 it was nice to hear Henderson taking some trombone solos again. ---Alex Henderson, AllMusic Review

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