

Elvin Jones – The Main Force (2001)

Written by bluesever

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01. 'Salty Iron' - 5:15 - (Ryo Kawasaki) 02. 'Sweet Mama' - 6:22 - (Gene Perla) 03. 'Mini Modes' - 10:32 - (David Williams) 04. 'Philomene' - 4:38 - (Ed Bland) 05. 'Song Of Rejoicing After Returning From A Hunt' - 15:43
Elvin Jones - Drums Dave Williams - Bass Ryo Kawasaki - Guitar Albert Dailey - Keyboards Angel Allende - Percussion (3-5) Dave Johnson - Percussion (1-2) Reeds - Dave Liebman (1-2) , Frank Foster (3-5) , Pat LaBarbera , Steve Grossman (2-5)

This inconsistent 1976 release from the mighty Elvin Jones is most successful when it draws on the high-energy, advanced hard bop style of the drummer's post-Coltrane period. It's a different story when it comes to the date's superfluous accommodations to fusion. Ryo Kawasaki's squelchy wah-wah guitar serves as the date's chief fusion device. At times, Kawasaki functions usefully in a role somewhat based on John McLaughlin's approach with Miles Davis in the late '60s. Mostly, he comes across as an additional flavor calculated to skew the music's appeal to the rock audience. Still, the opening track, Kawasaki's "Salty Iron," is wonderful, funky, jazz fusion, but it's not a track that calls for Jones' peerless gifts. "Philomene" and "Mini Modes" are in a more hard bop vein, but their potential is undermined by Kawasaki's trendy licks and the tinny chime of Al Dailey's electric piano. The highlight is Gene Perla's "Sweet Mama." Here, guest saxophonist Dave Liebman fires up some tasty, apocalyptic mayhem over a roiling, rhythm-section tempest. There's also a magical solo spot from Jones. This track is helped considerably by Dailey more suitably playing an acoustic piano and bassist Dave Williams setting aside his electric in favor of his upright. As for the 16-plus-minute "Song of Rejoicing," this marathon of collective, percussive noodling, including extensive pad slapping from reed players Pat Labarbera and Frank Foster, is simply an ill-conceived shamle. ---Jim Todd, Rovi

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