Everette Harp - For The Love (2000)



01. So Automatic [04:34] 02. I Just Can't Let Go [04:42] 03. I Miss You With Me [04:52] 04. I Can't Take It Anymore [03:59] 05. Right Back Atcha [04:39] play *06. Love Conditionally [04:46] 07. We Don't Have To Say Goodbye [05:15] 08. Dancin With You [04:52] 09. Where Were You When I Needed You [04:44] 10. Put It Where You Want It [04:39]*
play

Personnel: Everette Harp (vocals, soprano saxophone, programming); Gerard LaBeaud (vocals, various instruments); 20/Twenty (vocals); Buster, Shavoni (various instruments); Jerry Hey, Gary Grant, Bill Rekenback (horns); George Duke (piano, keyboards); Tim Heintz (organ, keyboards); Ricky Peterson (keyboards); Tony Maiden, Mike Sims, A. Ray Fuller, David Barry, Paul Jackson Jr., Jeff Golub (guitar); Alex Al, Larry Kimpel (bass); Li'l John (drums); Lenny Castro (percussion).

High ambition and a mix of middle-of-the-road funk with straight-ahead and other stylistic ventures has always been the popular saxman's trademark as an artist and performer. On For the Love, it seems like Everette Harp enjoys the challenge of letting go of pretension, focusing on the love of song, and, above all, keeping things simple. To help him find that crucial balance, Harp brought in veteran producer Steve Dubin (George Benson, Al Jarreau, Richard Elliot) to co-write (with Harp) and produce six of the tracks. Not surprisingly, the Dubin-produced tracks hit the mark every time. The retro-funk opening track, "So Automatic," begins with Harp's alto cruising along over a basic, chunky hip-hop groove, with minimal synth and wah-wah guitar enhancement; Harp returns quickly to the catchy hook after each quick verse, enhancing the emotion of the tune by doubling his horn rather than going crazy with improvisation, as he might have in the past. The only exotic production touch on "I Just Can't Let Go" is a simple synth-generated vibes harmony that recurs at the beginning of each verse; the rest of the tune finds Harp just playing a pretty, low-key melody over a clicking groove. Most of the soulful, Sanborn-like "Right Back Atcha" is about Harp's increasingly aggressive sax over the moody, bluesy atmospheres created by keyboardist Ricky Peterson. Peterson's Hammond B-3 is also the most prominent outside harmony feature on "Love Conditionally." Two of the best tracks on For the Love are pretty much sax and guitar duets. "Dancin' With You" has a sensuous groove

and a slightly bluesy keyboard harmony underneath a snappy note-for-note duet with Doc Powell. All this points towards Harp's love for the blues, but he saves his best chops for last, a rollicking jam with Jeff Golub's crisp electric guitar on a brassy cover of the Crusaders' classic "Put It Where You Want It." Harp drives away the usual slick polish here, opening the track with loose call-and-response guitar-sax pleasantries before letting Golub lead the melodic way. Then the saxman joins in and the two ride an explosive wave over a sizzling horn section. Towards the middle, the two take breaks from the main melody for some raw and fiery solo action. It's a more organic approach than Harp has ever taken, and it's also one of his best-ever tracks. --- Jonathan Widran, allmusic.com

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