

The Ramsey Lewis Trio □ – Upendo Ni Pamoja (1972)

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A1 Slipping Into Darkness 6:13 A2 People Make The World Go Round 4:31 A3 Please Send Me Someone To Love 4:31 A4 Got To Be There 3:01 A5 Concierto De Aranjuez 8:54 B1 Upendo Ni Pamoja (Love Is Together) 7:22 B2 Trilogy 8:45 B3 Put Your Hand In The Hand 3:51 B4 Collage 6:34 Acoustic Bass, Electric Bass – Cleveland Eaton Steinway Concert Grand Piano, Fender Rhodes Electric Piano – Ramsey Lewis Drums, Percussion – Morris Jennings

This marked Ramsey Lewis' third album for Columbia and the first to feature the Ramsey Lewis Trio. The most famous members had gone on to other successes. Red Holt and Eldee Young were signed to Atlantic as Young-Holt Unlimited, and of course later member Maurice White founded Earth, Wind and Fire. Upendo Ni Pamoja has the rhythm section of bassist Cleveland Eaton and drummer Morris Jennings. Unlike many early-'70s sets, Upendo Ni Pamoja is a pretty straight-ahead date without Lewis indulging in tracks with funky overtones. Covers predominate here. The trio does a fairly true though subdued take on War's "Slippin' into Darkness" with Lewis on Fender Rhodes. Lewis' gentle playing is found throughout "People Make the World Go Round," although this version of the trio did an even better live take on the Save the Children soundtrack. The best cover, Michael Jackson's "Got to Be There," has Lewis playing a Steinway Concert Grand with an arrangement that spotlights the trio sound. The smooth title is one of Lewis' finest songs of the period. The problem with this is that few tracks stay with the listener. This is a cut or two away from being truly essential. ---Jason Elias, AllMusic Review

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