

REZA KHAN; Next Train Home (rezakhanmusic)

Written by Bill B

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Plenty of releases have great back stories but none, I'd say, as interesting as 'Next Train Home' from New York based jazz guitarist Reza Khan. For starters Bangladesh born Reza is (no disrespect) a part time jazzer. He has a very important "day job" that puts music into perspective. You see he works for the United Nations as a programme manager – working world-wide in conflict zones trying to broker peace and reconciliation. It was during his last tour for the UN that the idea for 'Next Train Home' crystallised. Whilst away, in his down time, he sketched out 12 tunes on his lap top and, we're told, a folding guitar! Sadly he was then hospitalised – he was suffering severe dehydration but defied doctors, to leave his hospital to recuperate in a hotel room while polishing the music sketches he'd made earlier on his trip.

Then back in NYC, Reza got down to work and despite being that "part time jazz man" that I've just described, his standing in the East coast jazz milieu is such that he can call on some big names to help him create his music and here, amongst the side men, are guitarist Nils, pianist Mark King, bassist Mark Egan, saxophonist David Mann and drummer Graham Hawthorne. Maybe the biggest names though are sax player Jeff Kashiwa and ace keyboardist Philippe Saisse. Those two join Reza on one of the LP's big tunes... 'Gathering'. This easy paced smooth jazz romp (flavours of the Rippingtons and Special EFX) sums up the album's feel.... classy and cool with a soul undertow. Saisse plays keyboard vibes on this one while he takes to the marimba on the exotic 'Club 368' which offers flautist David Mann the opportunity to shine. The lazy Latin shuffle 'Beyond The Trees' is another album highlight as is the LP title track – the Earl Klugh flavoured 'Next Train Home' is the more poignant given the context in which it was written. And, says, Reza, it's the key to his current sound *"I feel The title represents a destination where I'm totally comfortable and at ease surrounded by familiar sounds, emotions and convictions as an artist"*.

REZA KHAN; Next Train Home is out now.

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