

Created by: Edward F. Nesta

Spyro Gyra - Down The Wire

Spyro Gyra - Down the Wire is a return to the band's beginning as they record the release in Buffalo, New York where it all started for them musically with their free flowing and straight ahead improvisational jazz.



[Spyro Gyra - Down The Wire](#)

Down The Wire: *Down The Wire; Unspoken; Not For Nothin'; Island Pond; The Tippin' Point; Ice Mountain; A Flower For Annie Jeanette; La Zona Rosa; What It Is; A Distant Memory; Make It Mine*

Personnel: Tom Schuman: Keyboards; Scott Ambush: Bass; Jay Beckenstein: Saxophones; Julio Fernandez: Guitars; Bonny B: Drums, Percussion, Vocals; Marc Quiñones: Percussion on "La Zona Rosa"; Gerardo Velez: Percussion on "Unspoken" and "A Flower for Annie Jeanette," Horn section on "La Zona Rosa"; Don Harris: Trumpet; Bill Harris: Tenor Sax and Flute; Ozzie Melendez: Trombone

Spyro Gyra - Down The Wire was released on the [Heads Up International](#) label a division of **Concord Music Group**. This marks the seventh release under the Heads Up Label and the third release that I have reviewed in the [Music Scene](#) section - please read [Good to Go-Go](#) and [A Night Before Christmas](#) though I have been a big fan of Spyro Gyra since the early 70's.

What makes **Down The Wire** special is that this is the first release that the band recorded back in the place where it all started for Spyro Gyra, Buffalo, New York. Though the band has gone through a few changes with members since the early 70's, Buffalo was the bands' original hometown and this where they recorded the classic song, *Morning Dance*. So, they have gone back to their roots and away from the unplanned distractions that recording in New York City tends to have, and the result is a free flowing fusion of music and creativity similar to the elements that were there when they laid down the track *Morning Dance*.

The title track, written by Scott Ambush, *Down the Wire* opens the release with funk and sass letting Scott's bass and Bonny B's drums set the tone for the rest of the release. They let the listener know that Spyro Gyra is back and their fusion of creative energy and improvisation is unleashed. Letting their instruments cool down a bit after the pace set by *Down the Wire*, the laid-back track *Unspoken* follows with the bass and drum line holding down the beat while letting the other members have a reunion as former band member and percussionist Gerardo Velez joins in on the fun.

Not For Nothing is a tight track that shines with some funky bass interludes and guitar riffs to complement the sax solos against a rhythmic melody. The track *Island Pond* slows it down and features a poignant melding of the saxophone and the piano, and the group's focus is on the emotional element that music brings with this calming track. *The Tippin' Point* moves to a swing-jazz beat that lets the band stray a bit as

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they each add their own unique element to the mix.

The track *A Flower For Anne Jeanette* brings back Gerardo Velez for some percussion work to meld with the exceptional fret work of Scot Ambush on bass and the moving keyboard work by Tom Schuman. Changing pace they break out the hot Latin beat on the track *La Zona Rosa* that brings back another former band member and percussionist Marc Quiñones, as well as features a superb three piece horn section and the blistering guitar work of Julio Fernandez.

Other tracks include the rousing jazz and funk track *What It Is* and a track that reflects a bit of the past with the present entitled *A Distant Memory*, which brings out a playful interplay as they look back at their beginning, and as Jay says "...was a time in our life that - although we didn't know it then - was supremely magical."

As the saying goes, you should always leave how you entered, so they close out the release with the track *Make It Mine*, a bookend funky backbeat track to the opening track *Down The Wire*. The song features Bonny B and Scot taking center stage with Bonny B's vocals playing MC and calling out the band members in a teasing and patronizing manner to invoke some great solos and grooves.

Websites where you can procure **Spyro Gyra - Down The Wire** are **CD Universe**, [EMusic](#), [Amazon](#), [Concord Music Group](#), [Tower Records](#), and [Spyro Gyra](#).

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