REVIEW FOR DAVE SHARP’S SECRET SEVEN CD “7” on Blue Pie Records

****Track listing: Africano; Chrispy Underground; Skeleton Key; Blackout; Boop Bwee Ahh; The Seventh Secret; Lootmar (Wind Song); Africano [Radio Edit]; Can I Be Your Squeeze?

**FROM AUDAUD.COM**[**http://www.audaud.com/article.php?ArticleID=7004**](http://www.audaud.com/article.php?ArticleID=7004)On his sophomore solo outing, *7*, Detroit bassist Dave Sharp and his outfit, Dave Sharp's Secret Seven, confirm there is still lots of soul, jazz and groove left in the Motor City. The Secret Seven, a quartet with various guests, is a solid ensemble that mixes R'n'B, jazz, funk, boogaloo, Middle Eastern elements and more into an all-original, jazz-funk seven-song set buttressed with two bonus tracks.

The Secret Seven have music backgrounds in the Michigan region that gives the material a hefty Northern inclination. Sharp has worked with other jazz artists as well as rock bands in and out of the Detroit scene. Multi-horn man Chris Kaercher has experience with soul/pop players such as The Temptations and Aretha Franklin. Keyboardist Dale Grisa has recorded with numerous Michigan-based pop, blues and jazz performers. The basic foursome is rounded out by drummer Eric "Chucho" Wilhelm. The diverse guests also have extensive Detroit-area credits.

The compositions - most co-written by Sharp and Kaercher - run the gamut from post bop to boogie. Jazz heads should check out the John Coltrane-inspired mid-tempo "Blackout," animated by Grisa's potent piano skills, Sharp's deep-seated bass and Kaercher's melodic sax. A prime example of a cut with a dance floor declivity is "Boop Bwee Ahh," which has a seventies feel, with Grisa laying down a simmering Hammond B3 backdrop, Andre Frappiér furnishing apt wah-wah guitar and Kaercher showcasing his soulful sax. "Chrispy Underground" has a similar approach, adding a boogaloo attitude spiced by a scintillating Grisa piano solo, a bluesy Kaercher harmonica performance and Sharp's ever-constant bass groove.

The group displays a Southern charm on New Orleans-styled rumba "Skeleton Key," where the horn section sounds tight and gritty. Wilhelm's drums and percussion and Grisa's organ contribute a savory calypso flavoring while Chris McCall slips in some tangy non-verbal vocalizations. The festive cumbia "Africano," an album highlight, exhibits bubbling rhythms with an Afro-Cuban undertow. A briefer rendering of the same tune is one of two bonus tracks. While the second version of "Africano" seems redundant, Chuck Carbo's Crescent City R'n'B hit "Can I Be Your Squeeze?" affords the assemblage an opportunity to get greasier and do some jive, proving jazz cats from above the Mason-Dixon line can get down and dirty just like their Southern counterparts. While Sean Ike and McCall handle the vocal chores, Grisa, Sharp and Wilhelm effect a steadfast rhythmic course.

The Secret Seven produce catchy and buoyant music that retains momentum throughout, from the bouncy percussion that initiates opener "Africano" to the conclusive horn blast that ends "Can I Be Your Squeeze?" Sharp and his crew are not out to reinvent jazz, rather they deliver a party atmosphere that emphasizes entertainment and good vibes.