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 Eric Nemeyer’s Jazz Inside NY   
March 2010 Issue**Dave Sharp's Secret Seven self titled album begins with a song that would make even the most atonal and non-rhythmic person want to get up and dance. The opening track, **“Africano,”** is a mixture of Latin, African and jazz sentiments, with Eric “Chucho” Wilhelm laying down some incredible multi-layered percussion. Dale Grisa provides a contagious piano groove and Kris Kurzawa’s guitar solo would make any jam band fan jump for joy.   
  
The second track **(Chrispy Underground”)** continues the dance vibe, but this time getting a little funkier with it. A consistent bass groove is laid down by Sharp and doubled by baritone sax. Pianist Dale Grisa comps in the most perfect way, as potent horn parts come in to the mix. Suddenly Grisa comes out in front with some very tasty piano riffs. It is a long form blues, and Kaercher rips it open with deep and dirty harmonica work that would make Sonny Boy Williamson rise from the dead. This music could be called progressive groove-the groove builds and builds as layers are gradually added.

It’s time for some cowbell on **“Skeleton Key”** which brings a tango flavor to the proceedings. The musicians take turns telling stories, none of which interrupt the dance-ability of these songs-they are adventurous but within the confines of groove-not at all a bad restriction.

For the fourth track, **“Blackout,”** the Secret Seven change things up a bit, placing more of an emphasis on exploring a mood than a groove. Nevertheless, a bluesy bass line motif carries through simple changes of this reflective, slow to medium tempo piece. Kaercher gets a beautiful and breathy tone from his tenor and Grisa’s improvisations conjure memories of Bill Evans on Kind of Blue.

**“The Seventh Secret”** is a cool mixture of different elements. There is the African and Latin vibe in the percussion, a rock back beat from the trap set, some Eastern sounding electric guitar, and some percussive funk guitar for good measure. Sharp is the star of this tune, playing all the guitar parts and bass.

**“Lootmar (The Wind Song)”** has a very ambient vibe due to its many sound effects-long sustained notes from the organ, and otherworldy cymbal work from Wilhelm but it also features very definitive and rock-like drum beats, keeping it firmly rooted. Toward the end, the band takes it to a totally different place as Sharp busts into a funky bass line and the gears change.

**“Can I Be Your Squeeze”** ends the album on a fun note, featuring a vocal duet with Sean Ike and Chris McCall. It’s a funky tune that definitely calls for some dancing and it has a vocal l that will stick people’s heads long after the song ends. Sharp and his Secret Seven group create music that makes you feel good and most of the time, want to move-but they are also highly capable of exploring more nuanced and reflective places, yet always making sure to take the listener along wherever they are going. -Herbie Gamura