

Prasanna *Be The Change*

SUSILA MUSIC 2007

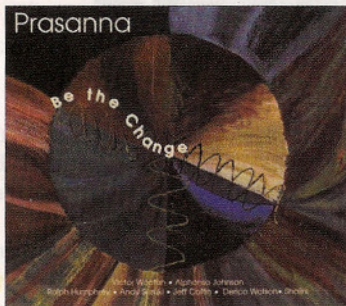
★★★★½

On *Be The Change* Madras, India-born Prasanna writes, plays guitar and sings his happy fusion of jazz with the highly spiced,

electrically charged sensibilities of Karnatic music. These are South Indian classical pieces (talas) that tend to be rhythmically intense, classically executed and based on intricately composed forms (unlike the more familiar North Indian style, which is more expressive and improvisational).

Prasanna's guitar works Karnatic elements deftly into pieces based in jazz form and harmony; his distinctive use of ornamental trill is evident in his acoustic/electric solo on the ballad "Kalyani Connection." His "Blues" exemplifies how hypnotic rhythmic kernels may infuse jazz-rock with refreshingly clever, psychologically uplifting ideas.

Prasanna plays solid guitar and sings fevered lines with the decisive control and authority that marks the best Karnatic art. Bassists Victor Wooten and Alphonso Johnson, and drummers



Ralph Humphrey and Derico Watson play in this rarefied idiom with majestic chops and quicksilver reflexes: Picture dancers moving in astonishingly elaborate choreographic unison like a flock of shorebirds. "Ragabop" effectively juxtaposes bebop and raga by seesawing between swing and

straight. Upper reeds give wonderful buoyancy to "Pangaea Rising," "Satyam" and "Grapevine." Yet Prasanna's cosmic message in "Satyam," a centerpiece inspired by ancient Hindu scriptures (Upanishads), exhorting us to aspire to goals of betterment through concentration and positive thinking, might be better realized jazz-wise with more conviction and variety in the bubbly solos. —Fred Bouchard

Be The Change: Pangaea Rising; Ta Ka Ta Ki Ta Blues; Satyam; Ragabop; The Grapevine; Dharma Becomes Alabama; Uncensored; Bliss Factor, Part I; Bliss Factor, Part II; Kalyani Connection. (70:03)

Personnel: Prasanna, guitars, konnakol, tala, vocal (2, 7); Shalini, vocal (2, 8); Andy Suzuki, tenor and alto saxophones, piano, alto flute, bass clarinet & clarinet; Jeff Coffin, tenor and soprano saxophones; flute, alto flute, bass clarinet, clarinet; Alphonso Johnson, Victor Wooten, bass; Ralph Humphrey, Derico Watson, drums.

Ordering Info: www.guitarprasanna.com