



Bio information: **ELTON DEAN**
Title: "**Moor-song**" (Cuneiform Rune 143)

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FILE UNDER: JAZZ

English free jazz/saxophone legend Elton Dean has been in the public eye for over 30 years. He started his career in 1965 with the legendary blues singer Long John Baldry in Baldry's band Bluesology, where Dean also performed with pianist Reginald Dwight. (Dwight later became Elton John, renaming himself after bandmates Elton [Dean] and [Long] John [Baldry].)

Dean has played in numerous well-known bands, including the Keith Tippett Group (1968-69), Soft Machine (1969-1972), Centipede (1971-72), Ninesense (1976-78), Hopper/Dean/Tippett/ Gallivan (1977-78), In Cahoots (1973-present) and many others. His discography as a band leader is extensive and as a band member, enormous. Cuneiform has previously released three CDs featuring Dean: "Just Us" (Rune 103), a reissue of Dean's very first solo album, recorded while he was still a member of Soft Machine; "Silent Knowledge" (Rune 83) by the Elton Dean Quintet, and "Bladik" (Rune 92) by Dean, Dunmall, Levin, Rogers, Rudd & Tippett.

When Cuneiform reissued "Just Us" in 1998, it was received as a wake-up call for long-delayed recognition of Britain's free jazz and fusion scenes. The Wire called the reissue "a timely reminder of how potent and independent-minded a force early British free jazz was, even though it received a fraction of the praise lavished upon the American scene." "These are great jams" said Popwatch "even better than rivals Colosseum, and more distinctly jazzish than Weather Report." Other magazines also called "Just Us" a classic. In the words of Signal to Noise: "The record has all the hallmarks of fusion done right: heady, free spirited explorations utilizing electric instruments grounded by energetic, rockish grooves... Indeed, listen to the final track... and you'll hear the sound that a million up-and-coming young jazz/funk bands are unknowingly striving toward."

In 1997, Cuneiform released "Bladik", an improv record featuring Dean and five other musicians. Jazz Times noted that "Whoever said that collective improvisation is best realized in duos and trios hasn't heard enough albums like "Bladik"." The previous year, Cuneiform released "Silent Knowledge", featuring the Elton Dean Quintet. The Wire called "Silent Knowledge" "big, brawny, free-minded jazz, with pounds more substance than most of the music being made under the jazz tag... They may not look like angels, these keepers of stubborn and passionate sounds, but their music sings."

As the 21st century begins, interest in Dean and other English free jazz players continues to rise, thanks in part to new releases on numerous labels by Dean and his contemporaries and reissues of their earlier works. In an interview Dean gave to Signal to Noise, he stated that "I've got four labels that'll put out a record of mine every year. There's enough activity for me to fulfill that easily."

For his fourth Cuneiform release, "Moor-song", Dean appears with five other players: Fred Baker (bass); Liam Genockey (drums), Mark Hewins (guitar), Alex Maguire (organ), and Mark Sanders (percussion). Consisting of 8 compositions and recorded in three separate sessions between 1998-1999, "Moor-songs" shows Dean entirely at home with an impressive range of jazz settings and styles. The CD begins with a swinging, Hammond Organ-driven session that may be seen as a nod to Medeski, Martin & Wood. The latter part of "Moor-song" - which includes the title track -- features spacier, more atmospheric sets, with the music more based on moods and drones. "Moor-songs" shows Dean in top form throughout, exploring the varied topography of British jazz via sax. It should appeal to aficionados of jazz, fusion and free music alike.