

ALBUM REVIEWS

charnett moffett

NEW LOVE



New Love

Charnett Moffett (Motéma Music)

by Alex Henderson

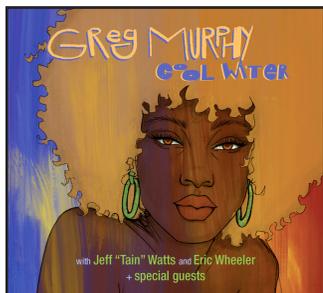
Bassist Charnett Moffett has been making a name for himself as early as 1983 when he was featured on saxophonist Branford Marsalis' *Scenes in the City* and his first album as a leader, *Net Man*, was released by Blue Note in 1987. Over the years, Moffett has made it abundantly clear that he had no desire to play one type of jazz exclusively and he effortlessly moves between genres on this diverse recording, which finds him sticking to his originals and the electric bass. Moffett's accompaniment includes Motéma founder Jana Herzen on guitar, Corey Garcia or Malick Koly on drums and Irwin Hall on tenor saxophone, soprano saxophone and alto flute. The latter only appears on half of the selections but has room to stretch out.

New Love gets off to an exuberant, almost giddy start with "Swinging in the Realms", which has a boppish melody. The album takes a moodier turn with "We Remember" and "Today" and Moffett moves into the electric avant garde realm with the dissonant "Higher Dimensions". The fusion offering "Flying in the Air" hints at Weather Report and "ETQ" has an mood that suggests the music of Ethiopia and Mali.

New Love includes a vocal-oriented section at the end of the CD: "Rejoice", "Spirit & Bride Song", "Love for the People" and the title track, all with a very spiritual quality and Moffett showing himself to be a capable singer. "Spirit & Bride Song" has a strong reggae influence while the title track and "Rejoice" bring jazz overtones to a blend of soul and rock.

Back in 1984-85, some jazz critics were hailing Moffett as an important contributor to the hardbop/postbop revival movement known as the Young Lions. But from *Net Man* on it was evident that Moffett was interested in much more than that and his eclectic nature continues to serve him well on *New Love*.

For more information, visit motema.com. Moffett live-streams Jun. 30th-Jul. 2nd and Jul. 25th at yoshis.com.



Cool Water

Greg Murphy (Whaling City Sound)

by Russ Musto

The followup to his chart-topping *Bright Idea* reunites keyboard player Greg Murphy with bassist Eric Wheeler and drummer Jeff "Tain" Watts on a genre-leaping program bolstered by a host of guests.

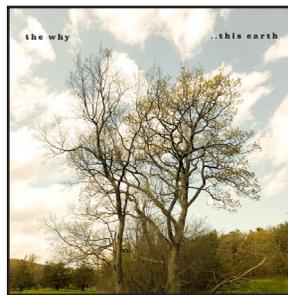
The trio kicks things off with an arrangement of "Chim-Chim-Cher-ee", which clearly identifies Murphy as an accomplished McCoy Tyner acolyte while also demonstrating each player's strength as both soloist and accompanist. Ku-umba Frank Lacy joins on vocals for a powerful rendition of Steely Dan hit "Green Earrings", which also features a rocking David Kikoski synthesizer solo. Murphy's soulful "My Life" adds Cameroonian vocalist Kaïssa Doumbe Moulongo, who

harmonizes a vocal chorus borrowed from Roy Ayers' "Everybody Loves The Sunshine" with Lacy and then solos wordlessly and in her native Duala language. The trio charges straightahead on Murphy's "Theme For Ronnie" and then grooves on his "Friendship", joined by Kikoski and vibraphonist Bill Ware.

Murphy's "Free Fur Nina", a dedication to his feline pet, is a flowing free improvisation by the trio and his "Enkare Nairobi", inspired by a 2019 trip to Kenya, opens and closes with the recorded voices of the Maasai women chorus' greeting song sung upon his United Nations-sponsored arrival. In between we hear the buoyant flute of T.K. Blue and vibrant Moulongo singing her loosely translated interpretation of the song's words in Duala. Stirring arco and lyrical pizzicato bass, along with romance-drenched pianisms and finessed brush work, are featured on the trio's interpretation of Johnny Green-Edward Heyman-Robert Sour-Frank Eyton's "Body And Soul", combining John Coltrane and George Coleman's arrangements of the classic ballad.

The band, with Lacy on vocals and Marc Cary's synthesizer augmenting Murphy's keyboards gets funky on The Isley Brothers' "Coolin' Me Out", then the trio stretches out acoustically on Wayne Shorter's beautiful "Lost" and Murphy's hard-hitting "Cuttin' Trane Corners", combining melodic segments of former boss Rashied Ali's "Cuttin' Corners" and Coltrane's "Miles' Mode". Murphy shows his mettle as an R&B composer to close: dancing "You Decide" has Lacy and Moulongo on respective lead and background vocals singing his love song lyric.

For more information, visit whalingcitysound.com. Murphy is at *Let Love Inn* Jul. 8th with Lawrence Clark, Lorenzo's Jul. 10th, 11th, 17th and 24th, *Riverbank State Park* Jul. 18th with Ray Blue and Dana Discovery Center Jul. 25th with *Harlem Blues & Jazz Band*. See Calendar.



..This Earth

The Why (s/t)

by Elliott Simon

This is the debut release from The Why, the duo of guitarist Anders Nilsson and drummer Jeremy Carlstedt. It quickly puts the listener on notice that to save the planet there needs to be a change of epic proportion. Similar to the iconic beginning and conclusion of "The End" (*The Doors*, Elektra, 1967), a hypnotic pattern with an ancient feel announces and echoes that the "Sunset" of our existence has begun. However, here the analogous apocalyptic message, brilliantly delivered by a slashing psychedelic guitar/drums repartée, serves as opener rather than closer.

Carlstedt is both articulate and aggressive, using textural and timbral nuance to state his opinions boldly whereas Nilsson's broader arsenal summons all manner of mind-blowing sounds; together they make for great conversation. Like all accomplished jazz drummers, Carlstedt adapts to his surroundings and in this intimate setting he is exceptional. He carries a hefty rhythmic load, allowing Nilsson to brandish his chops on several heavy blues/rock-infused cuts. After "Sunset", Nilsson leans on filthy riffs drenched in acid for a short "Clean", which Carlstedt's steady hand keeps on course.

A very personal statement, the session is a two-person journey that explores old patterns while discovering new ones as it searches for answers through improvisation. Compact and economical, short by today's standards, aspects still engender

a prog-rock ethos via intense passages and broad instrumental scope. These contrast with pleasing primeval features, as on the ethereal "Rustling Trees", which is a wash of sound standing apart from the fiery opener. Closer "Dawn" signals a laidback bluesy new beginning gathering strength by way of Eric Clapton/Frank Zappa-kindred guitar phrasing. But in the end complete resolution is elusive and the session's angst is the apprehension that, although its music succeeds magnificently, doom may await its subject matter.

For more information, visit jeremycarlstedt.bandcamp.com. Nilsson and Carlstedt are at *Bushwick Public House* Jul. 12th. See Calendar.

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- Cranes: Matthias Müller/Eve Risser/Christian Marien – *Formation < Deviation* (Relative Pitch)
- Hearth (Susana Santos Silva, Mette Rasmussen, Ada Rave, Kaja Draksler) – *Melt* (Clean Feed)
- Julian Lage – *Squint* (Blue Note)
- Russ Lossing/Gerry Hemingway – *Twice* (Aqua Piazza)
- William Parker – *Mayan Space Station* (AUM Fidelity)
- John Pizzarelli – *Better Days Ahead (Solo Guitar Takes on Pat Metheny)* (Ghostlight Deluxe)
- Irène Schweizer/Hamid Drake – *Celebration* (Intakt)
- Nina Simone – *The Montreux Years* (BMG)

Laurence Donohue-Greene, Managing Editor

- [Ahmed] – *Nights on Saturn (communication)* (Astral Spirits)
- Don Cherry – *The Summer House Sessions* (Blank Forms)
- Todd Cochran – *Then and Again, Here and Now* (Sunnyside)
- Harold Danko – *Spring Garden* (SteepleChase)
- Fire! – *Defeat* (Rune Grammofon)
- Stephan Goldbach – *Transit* (JazzHausMusik)
- Johnny Hodges – *13 Mars 1961 (Live in Paris)* (Fremeaux & Associes)
- Masabumi Kikuchi – *Hanamichi (The Final Studio Recording)* (Red Hook)
- Joe Lovano – *Garden of Expression* (ECM)
- Michael Wollny, Emile Parisien, Tim Lefebvre, Christian Lillinger – *XXXX* (ACT Music)

Andrey Henkin, Editorial Director