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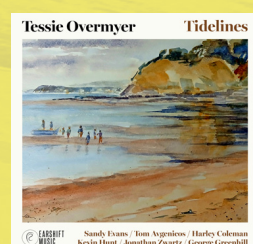
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Dream Up
Tomas Fujiwara (Out of Your Head)
by Matty Bannond

Lush fantasies and feverish visions overlap and undergird each other on this shapeshifting release, *Dream Up*, which features nine original compositions by drummer Tomas Fujiwara. Each of the nine tracks contains abrupt mood swings and about-turns, while maintaining the album's coherently dreamlike character. It's a rich recording of expansive musical worlds that envelop and engulf the listener. This sonic depth reflects outstanding work by the engineers who captured the sounds from a wagonload of instruments in the mix. Fujiwara interacts with a collection of string and percussive hardware played by Tim Keiper, plus Kaoru Watanabe's three Japanese drums and one shinobue bamboo flute. Patricia Brennan leads most melodies with her celebrated, sensitive vibraphone approach.

The title track jump starts the album with a repeating low-note figure, played on ngoni (a West African string instrument akin to a lute). The sound is a stable anchor that digs into the ground beneath Brennan's rippling improvisations and Fujiwara's percussive raindrops. It's a slippery and slow-breathing composition. More hectic atmospheres emerge in the album's later sections. "Columns of Leaning Paint", for example, makes a jerky start before a dense passage of rattly percussion. The group then moves into a groove-driven segment with a clunky but forward-leaning flow. The concluding composition, "You Don't Have to Try", covers the most sonic ground, opening with a warm two-minute vibraphone statement. A heavy-legged but happy-hearted movement follows, which leads into a lullabyish landscape until Watanabe's transverse shinobue flute guides the music to its dancing finish.

Dream Up is an imaginative album with otherworldly ambience, grounded by its vast cast of tactile percussive equipment. Fujiwara's rhythms propel listeners from bar to bar, while his writing pulls them from one textural layer to the next. It's a rich recording and a rewarding experience.

For more info visit outofyourheadrecords.com. Fujiwara is at Nublu Jan. 9 (part of Winter Jazzfest.) See Calendar.



Cozmic Soul Gumbo
Ra Kalam Bob Moses (Ra Kalam)
Radiant Sky Drumming
Ra Kalam Bob Moses/Franklin Kiermyer
(Ra Kalam)
by Andrew Schinder

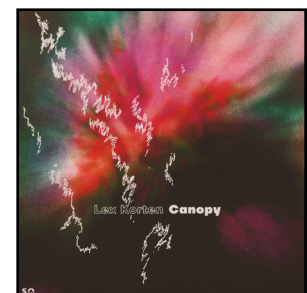
"The story of one of the most influential musicians people have never heard of," begins the teaser for the upcoming documentary on drummer-percussionist Ra Kalam Bob Moses, whose roots are certainly steeped in jazz history, having grown up in NYC surrounded by such icons as Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Abbey Lincoln

and Art Blakey. Moses, who turns 78 later this month, gained fame in the '60s and '70s, recording with jazz-rock fusion groups fronted by guitarists Larry Coryell and Pat Metheny, as well as vibraphonist Gary Burton. Yet, Moses has always been an iconoclast, never one to be hampered by the burden of artistic or commercial expectations, instead creating what he terms "living music"—spontaneous improvisation fueled by a spiritual connection to one's surroundings. Two recent releases, *Cozmic Soul Gumbo* and *Radiant Sky Drumming*, demonstrate this philosophy. Moses was bestowed the title "Ra Kalam" (the inaudible sound of the invisible sun) by his mentor (and frequent collaborator), guitar legend Tisziji Muñoz and directly ties into Moses' musical and spectral journey. Battling cancer, he certainly is not without challenges, but he remains steadfastly prolific and innovative, as is evidenced by these albums that reward focus and concentration, and ultimately invite listeners to join Moses on his artistic quest via improvisation.

Cozmic Soul Gumbo is the more "accessible" of the two, yet the music is undoubtedly daring and bold. A combination of improvised and Moses-penned compositions, he leads a fairly sizeable ensemble consisting of veterans and luminaries—four saxophonists: Tony Dagradi, Jeff Coffin, Art Edmaiston and Michael Atkins, plus Chris Alford (guitar), Aaron Gonzalez (bass) and fellow percussionists Bill Summers (of Herbie Hancock Headhunters fame) and Johnny Vidacovich. Together, they create a marvelously cacophonous free-jazz exploration that, when on the brink of losing the listener in its raucousness, backslides to a fresh pocket groove to reset. "Dancing Bears" and "Train to Outer Soulville" highlight this ethereal zig-zag, and "The Lioness" is a beautiful, slow-moving piece that honors the femininity of its title creature. The album ends with the almost jarringly straight-forward, yet tremendously effective, blues exercise "Blues in the Face", which brings the listener back to earth after a journey around Moses' namesake celestial entity.

The entirely-improvised *Radiant Sky Drumming's* title could not be more descriptive. The music is improvised percussion, pure and simple: no frills, no melodies. In essence, this album is Moses' "living music" philosophy distilled into its purest form. Here he teams with like-minded, Montreal-born percussionist Franklin Kiermyer to create a mystical journey that blends Moses' naturalistic approach with his drumming partner's Buddhist faith. Recorded live in Norway (where Moses keeps a home), the album manages to be both equally spontaneous and deliberate. With demonstrative titles such as "Gong Beyond Gong" and "Whirling Dervishes", it may not swing in the traditional sense, but it certainly captivates.

For more info visit bobmosesdrums.com. Moses' *Heart Breath Ensemble* (featuring Randy Brecker) is at the National Jazz Museum in Harlem Jan. 22. See Calendar.



Canopy
Lex Korten (Sounderscore)
by JR Simon

Canopy is pianist Lex Korten's first offering as a bandleader. This 13-track journey, recorded at The Bunker Studio in Brooklyn, offers a world where