

Søren Siegumfeldt String Swing

# THIS IS MESCHIYA LAKE

Released on CD, LP and Digital.

Stunt Records



Stunt Records CD & LP

STULP 19061

STUCD 19062



Meschiya Lake is a formidable singer whose incredible voice brings to mind the timbres of Billie Holiday, Dinah Washington, and Bessie Smith. A legend in her own right, Lake can also be found at the top of the “Best of the Beat” list – a ranking of the top singers in New Orleans by Off Beat Magazine there. Many years of hard work have resulted in her rise to the top in a city where the competition among musicians there is famously relentless. The Danish saxophonist, composer, and band leader Søren Siegumfeldt first encountered Meschiya Lake in the documentary “True Family,” which is a challenging film about a girl who plays traditional jazz with her band on the streets of New Orleans. When Hurricane Katrina strikes and the floods destroy everything, the road back is long and harrowing. It’s a struggle against a natural disaster, against euphoric drugs, and much more – and it’s hard not to tear up when the unbreakable practitioners of the city’s proudest traditions once again stand in The French Quarter as Meschiya fills up the streets acoustically with her voice, while swing dancers give their all and tourists film... clueless as to the drama that has unfolded just before.

Leading up to the recording with String Swing, Meschiya Lake and her small family stayed with Søren Siegumfeldt for a warm and sunny week in Copenhagen. Meschiya is a woman with a lot of heart, so the song-writing came to them easily as they composed half the material for the album together during that time.

My Dear U.S. of A. tells how Meschiya, as a new mother in the United States, felt pressured to emigrate and settle in Ireland – where children are not subjected to terrifying exercises on how to behave if a mass murderer appears. There’s the satirical song Stormy Daniels about the porn star Donald Trump allegedly entertained himself with at a country club while his wife cared for their new-born child. The album’s cover numbers are not the classic standards associated with polka dot dresses and moon beams (not that there’s anything wrong with them), but darker masterpieces from later decades written by icons such as Leonard Cohen, Nick Cave, and Townes van Zandt – a tune by the last of whom who gets an unexpectedly jazzy treatment, offering new clarity to

the lyrics. The artist Afroman’s humorous song, Because I Got High, which is about how his hunger for always getting high destroys his life, also gets a new twist – starting with tuba and a shaker, Meschiya interprets the narrative downfall while more musicians jump on, contributing calypso vibes on everything that went wrong.

String Swing started as a series of Django Reinhardt tribute jam sessions in a colonial garden house on the island of Amager and has resulted in three award-winning albums – RED SHOES (2002), BLUE HAT (2004), and WAITING FOR THE GOOD TIMES (2008). Fast forward more than a few years, and only the bandleader (Søren Siegumfeldt) and guitarist Jacob Fischer are still present from the early days – the other musicians here include the exciting rhythm section from Six City Stompers, supplemented by harmonica virtuoso Finn Poulsen and Henrik Silver on sousaphone. There are also a number of inspiring and inspired guests, including the incomparable Ole “Fessor” Lindgren, who shines whenever a thrilling riff appears; the DR Big Band’s star clarinetist Peter Fuglsang, and trumpet comet Björn Ingelstam, who both play brilliantly on Nick Cave’s dreary Up Jumped The Devil, an arrangement that brings to mind how it might have sounded if Duke Ellington had gotten his hands on it. On the song Lungs, which is Townes van Zandt’s beautiful but sad story of how his lungs fail him, Moslem Rahal (known as perhaps Syria’s best bamboo flute player) creates magic on both neo and kaval flutes.

And last but absolutely not least, there is the original creator of the project, moving freely between sub-genres of jazz, with the abilities to mine musical gold from unexpected places and cover lots of spiritual ground. He always conveys something fun, but never without meaning or emotional depth. The music is immediately captivating, but is always with gravity, whether he is reaching for the whimsical or dramatic. The ever-charming String Swing is once more at the top of its game and THIS IS MESCHIYA LAKE has all the qualities to become an album that, like those that came before it, will be taken off the shelf and listened to again and again.

*Meschiya Lake (voc), Søren Siegumfeldt (as, ts, brts, fl), Jacob Fischer (g), Finn Poulsen (g, hca), Peter Rosendal (el-p), Kasper Tagel (b), Henrik Silver (sousa), Morten Ærø (dr) + Moslem Rahal (ney, kaval), Bjørn Ingelstam (tp), Ole Fessor Lindgreen (tb), Peter Fuglsang (cl), Thomas Hass (ss), Arto Louis Eriksen (vib & perc), Mingus Alan Eriksen (tamb.)*

Everybody Knows/ A House In Encinitas/ Up Jumped The Devil/ The Search/ Lungs/ Stormy Daniels/ Wait Until Fall/  
Because I Got High/ My Dear U.S. of A./ Bull In China/ Elephants.

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