

Rez Abbasi's Invocation

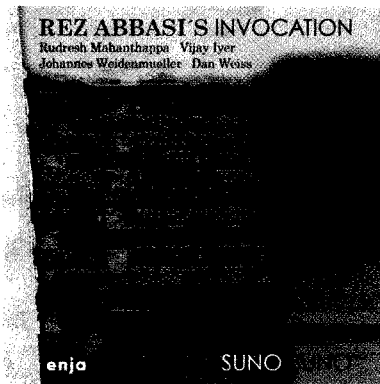
Suno Suno

ENJA 9575



When a bandleader uses his liner notes to explicitly discuss the influence of qawwali, a Pakistani devotional music, on his compositional process for his new album, you might reasonably expect to be greeted by a melody that reflects the scales and harmonic structure of the music when you hit “play.” Something that sounds a bit like Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, for instance.

You won't hear that on *Suno Suno*. What you will hear is a series of winding, uniquely structured original compositions that are built off a few basic ideas that lie at the heart of qawwali music. There is a rhythmic insistence to these pieces that can be traced to the group clapping in qawwali, while the doubling of melodies between sax and guitar teases out another element of the music. Abbasi stringently avoids writing melodies that imitate qawwa-



li songs or approach some sort of obvious hybrid.

He has the perfect band for accomplishing this synthesis. Vijay Iyer and Rudresh Mahanthappa both have subcontinental ancestry as well, and have made a dialogue with their heritage an essential part of their music, while drummer Dan Weiss has studied tabla and bassist Johannes Weidenmueller

has long experience with global influences. This quintet first recorded together in 2009, and their interplay is finely tuned.

The lines between composition and improvisation are blurry across the album; the players integrate the repetition of the compositions into their solos. Iyer's solo toward the end of “Nusrat” especially exemplifies this understanding of Abbasi's goals, goals *Suno Suno* achieves with admirable subtlety and skill.

—Joe Tangari

Suno Suno: Thanks For Giving; Onus On Us; Monuments (intro); Monuments; Nusrat; Overseas; Part Of One. (64:18)

Personnel: Rez Abbasi, guitar; Rudresh Mahanthappa, alto saxophone; Vijay Iyer, piano; Johannes Weidenmueller, bass; Dan Weiss, drums.

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