

Neon Egypt

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TALES OF KINGS LINER NOTES by Sandy Thompson

"The songs of Tales of Kings by Neon Egypt are first-take improvisations. Yet out of the potential for chaos indigenous to such spontaneity, Harrison Goldberg on soprano, tenor, and alto sax, and Steven Miller on his resonant, one-of-a-kind Shendai Ceremonial Drums travel a purposeful, though curvilinear journey. The languid flight of a singular bird, an ibis perhaps, coursing desert nights from Alexandria to Luxor, then on to Khartoum and Kampala. The music is the tone poem migration of sensibilities, as if the Nile could flow through Chicago.

"The album's whole personifies a timeless river tumbling over ancient stones, or the early a.m. negotiations of a big city's streets, as if mood indigo resided in civilization's crucible. It possesses azure meditations, scarlet musings, golden speculations, each aspiring to discovery in a world of slate gray-green melancholy. It wears textures velvet to worn corduroy. It exudes an allure of rhythm that manifests the seduction of danger.

"Goldberg and Miller handle their instruments in a way that accesses that subconscious place where only competent genius goes. Though there is a sense of lament on the wilderness they've chosen to traverse, never are they lost, struggling to find a way back to or out of any improvisation. There are in Harrison's work rare whiffs of Paul Desmond and Pharoah Sanders (Nejd) or Joao Gilberto (Triamorous), but never more than a speculated moment. He never massages any riff for that riff's sake. Miller's drumming elicits an African-ness, but never succumbs to overt ethnic references. The stage is theirs equally, as in Night of the Lotus, where Harrison's harmonic dissonance cruises inside and at half the pace of Miller's kinetic beat. It is being within non-being: a place where one senses, even at the end, that the music never stopped."

--Sandy Thompson, Northern California freelance writer and

art critic

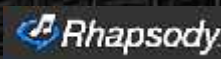
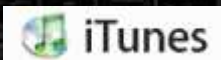
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"The Serpent"

"One of the best contemporary jazz duos on the web. Extraordinary drumming. Exotic melodies. Very nice stuff!"

--John Morgan Newbern

"When I first heard Neon Egypt I was amazed by the sax play, being a sax player myself. When you listen to Neon Egypt, you find yourself in a bazaar, in some kind of Egyptian town in the early 1900s, maybe in search of adventures in the desert, looking for some pyramid someone didn't discover yet... And just as a pyramid treasure, this music can let you experience fantastic travel in musical terms: rich jazz elements, and incredible sax play, well accompanied by another real talent playing the percussions. So, I couldn't resist and bought it as soon as I found it available on itunes... :-) Real talent, great sound. I love it!"

--Augusto Chiarle, The Wimshurst's Machine, Italy

"Listening to Tales Of Kings I am once again floating down the Nile, the ancient past flowing past. A farmer dips water into a jar tied to a pole, phrases of Koran are sung from a tower, boys slap mud into frames to dry as bricks. Sax answers drum, bounces from the bent overtones, builds reedy structures on the embankments of sound. Phrases are clipped then looping into lyrical flights. Echoes of Miles Davis in Spain. At times a deeper drum voice casts a shadow of disaster to come, rising flood, drying drought. But the cry of the sax is reborn, it rises like the call of the human spirit, insisting, like the river, on the ongoing flow of life. This becomes, with the sinking of the sun, a bit of blues. Your music, like the sphinx, poses riddles while offering profound answers. Play on."

--George Price

"A timeless floating sax over grounded rhythms of drums, Tales of Kings speaks for the beauty of water and desert- the great Nile: something between the poetry work of John Surman with the oud player Anouar Brahem (THIMAR, ECM) and the sacred sound of Alice Coltrane's Ptah the El Daoud..."

--Aye

"In Purdah" is one of the trippiest songs I have ever heard... Your music is amazing.. it really transports me to the middle east."

--Average Joe and the Bloggs

"I was having a horrible day today, I was underslept & incredibly late in my translation work, & my neighbors had decided to start renovating with a jackhammer... everything seemed to be going wrong & I hadn't properly worked for

days. I figured maybe I should listen to some music to take me mind off these things & focus on translating, something with no lyrics so it wouldn't overly distract me from my work. I love jazz even if I'm hip-hop artist, so I went on soundclick & searched for jazz bands. I saw yours, & remembered seeing Passage to Djibouti advertised long ago, so I started playing. & wow... I haven't stopped since, & it's been hours, literally. I've done more translation than I ever dreamed of today, & all my worries faded away. It didn't even feel like I was working... this is some of the most soothing, masterfully done fusion pieces I ever heard. The spontaneity of them only adds to the exploit. I've been playing your entire album over & over, probably for the 7 or 8th time now, & I'm very far from being bored. You have most DEFINITELY made my day."

--Toni Oscar

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