

Meshell Ndegeocello Introduces Sun Ra Tribute Album Red Hot + Ra: The Magic City



Credit: Charlie Gross

Meshell Ndegeocello introduces the latest Sun Ra tribute album from the Red Hot Organization with the single “Venus The Living Myth.” *Red Hot + Ra: The Magic City* is the third tribute album dedicated to the late jazz icon from the organization and Ndegeocello’s third time being on a Red Hot project. The song is a mix of Sun Ra’s “Rocket Number 9” and “The Living Myth.” Marshall Allen, the longtime leader of Sun Ra’s Arkestra is on the recording with jazz prodigy Immanuel Wilkins who played with them at the age of 10 years ago in Philadelphia. *Red Hot + Ra: The Magic City* seeks to take the

essence of Sun Ra's music and reimagine it through the lens of contemporary artists. Hip-hop, punk, and jazz vocalist Pink Siifu; drummer Kojo Roney, nephew of late trumpeter Wallace Roney; bassist Rashsaan Carter; vocalist-composer Justin Hicks, violinist Eddy Kwon and more are featured on the album.

Ndegeocello and Hector Castillo produced and mixed *Red Hot + Ra: The Magic City*. The Red Hot Organization previously released a cover of Sun Ra's "[Nuclear War](#)" in 2023. Ndegeocello revealed in a press statement that her reading of John Swed's *Space Is The Place: The Lives And Times Of Sun Ra* during the 2020 pandemic changed her view of the eccentric keyboard innovator who was born Herman Poole Blout.

"I haven't been the same since reading that book," says Meshell. "I think it's what inspired [2023's great Grammy-winning album] The Omnichord Real Book, in the sense of, 'what happens when you're no longer driven by youth?' Sun Ra's music is a living organism, and once you immerse yourself in his work, his life, you recognize there's a fork in the road – that you really have to make choices, because there's so many other realms and dimensions to explore Musically."

Red Hot + Ra: The Magic City will be released on April 12th. The Sun Ra series will have future albums produced by Om'Mas Keith, Madlib, and Kronos Quartet.