

Igmar Thomas' Revive Big Band Releases *Like A Tree It Grows*



Igmar Thomas' Revive Big Band has dropped *Like A Tree It Grows*. The band's first album comes after 14 years of the collective playing together and finding a contemporary way to meld jazz and hip-hop. The late Meghan Stabile launched the Revive Da Live concert series back in 2010 with this goal, and Igmar Thomas collaborated with her to make it happen, and the Revive Big Band was born. Wayne Shorter, Thelonius Monk, Dizzy Gillespie, and Gangstarr are honored on the album, which has a mix of original songs and classics. There are guest appearances from Bilal, Talib Kweli, Nicholas Payton, Myron Walden, Terrace Martin, Jean Baylor, Marcus Strictland, and more. Shorter's "Speak No Evil" is retooled as a brisk but snazzy jubilee that keeps the integrity of the original. The band's cover of Gang Starr's "Words I Manifest" features emcee Raydar Ellis providing the late Guru's rap as they glide through Dizzy Gillespie's "Night in Tunisia." The jazz-to-hip-hop cultural flow is seamless, and the presence of music from Gang Starr comes three decades after Guru completed the same mission with his *Jazzmatazz* series. Thomas's band plays everything with an exuberance that lets you know that their music is their ministry. *Like A Tree It Grows* is unique for its big band lens of hip-hop, and the energy of the music is the latest proof that the conversation between jazz and rap is not over.

