

Throwback: Madlib: Sunrays



“Sunrays” is a meandering slice of transcendent, jazzy hip-hop from Madlib’s five-piece band, Yesterday’s New Quintet. Monk Hughes, Ahmad Miller, Malik Flavors, and Joe McDurfey, and Otis Jackson Jr., (Madlib’s government name) were in the credits, rounding the band out to a full quintet. The instrumental that started with a maudlin violin but transforms into a rhythmically exciting yet tranquil hip-hop meditation on soul jazz landed on the 2001 *Elle’s Theme* EP. A full album from Yesterday’s New Quintet was released soon after during the same year. Madlib’s Quintet concept and the head-nodding trance of “Sunrays” are part of a longtime connection between hip-hop and jazz. Most fans have assumed that the Quintet is really just an alter ego for Madlib and the names of the band members are pseudonyms. Stones Throw said that they could not release too much information about the group because of

privacy concerns. What is known is that Madlib played the Fender Rhodes on all three of their releases. The group dissolved by 2007 and Madlib had already brought other artists like Karriem Riggins into the camp, which was then called Yesterday's Universe.

Madlib's home was destroyed in the Altadena Fires at the beginning of 2025 and he lost decades of music and studio equipment. He released the Your Old Droog collaboration "Woodstock 2029" at the end of September. The single will be included on their upcoming album as Droogie Otis.