

# Music Review: G&D (Georgia Anne Muldrow and Declaime) Black Love & War



Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â A *Soulful Missive for Black Survival*

Georgia Anne Muldrow and Declaime arrive with *Black Love & War* just as the country is seeing the term white supremacy enter the mainstream for the first time in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The longtime couple and musical partners have always been aware of

racial divisions in their music and they start the album by reintroducing their perspective as Africans living in America with the bombastic "Where I'm From." They are unapologetic about claiming their Blackness but they also make it known that they are people of the earth, the sun and stars. They course through the atmosphere with the heavy bottom of the drum and the accouterments of celestial synthesizers. The foundations of P and G-Funk are interspersed with gospel conviction, soul and early B-Boy and B-Girl styles. Muldrow handles most of the production with additional work from Oh No and Mike & Keys. The heft of their message escapes the needling feeling of being preached to because the songs carry a party vibe like the driving beat of "Peace Peace" whose lyrics promise future contentment when "all them devils is dead." The references to Black pop of the past expresses itself as guideposts for fresh articulation in the midst of an America that is wearing MAGA hats and celebrating *Black Panther*.

"The Battle" is part Isaac Hayes part disco and the blaxploitation chase scene overtones add urgency to Declaime's narrative about terroristic violence from the police.

The duo's critique of the world around them never lands in a rut of empty rhetoric because the pulsing music could just as easily be calling for a revolution on the dancefloor. Declaime's bluesman street corner philosopher flow is flexible enough to offer sternness, humor and compassion. He is a protective father to his daughter on "So Pretti" but becomes a smart comic creating laughter inside the rebellion of "Slave Revolt Skit." Muldrow's hearty vocals feel like a directive leading Black people through a modern Underground Railroad to flee police killings, mass shootings and being arrested for Living While Black.

There can be no real revolution without love and the endorphin-producing "Smile" lights up with guest

appearances from Aloe Blacc, Latoiya Williams and Ms. Dezy. Romantic love is one part of the intention but the radiance of "Smile" also celebrates self-love and morale-lifting affirmations. DeClair's verses and Muldrow's almighty vocals leave no room for interpretation especially when they are instructing Black folks on how to take a spiritual fighting stance in "The Battle." But the sonic axis of funk can be subversive when they make the insurrection of "187" sound like an outtake from a Snoop Dogg record.

*Black Love & War* was intended to be an endurance manual for Black life but anyone weary of the lasting wickedness of the color line and has a love for the funk can find a connection to G&D's sentiment and sound.