

Listen: Justin Hicks' Bedlam Blues From Red Hot Sun Ra Tribute



Cover Art by Cécile McLorin Salvant

"Bedlam Blues" is the second single from the *Red, Hot & Ra: The Magic City*. Justin Hicks performs the song that he wrote after hearing Sun Ra's poem, "The Mirror Of Things To Be." He explained in a statement:

"Some years ago I wrote a piece of a song based on Sun Ra's poem 'The Mirror Of Things To Be', over the years it's been a space for me to think through and speak on the state of humans who drive the world with their bodies. Sometimes it's hard to feel how integral we all are to every single system we live with. Yet imagining a different way or other systems can be terrifying and disorienting. "

The Meshell Ndegecello curated album brings the late Afrofuturist jazz innovator Sun Ra's music into a modern musical world. The music is not a strict group of cover songs but compositions inspired by Sun Ra's work which was a mix of cosmic philosophies, pageantry, and an encyclopedia of jazz styles performed by his Arkestra. Marshall Allen, the leader of the Arkestra, is on the album in addition to rapper/punk rocker Pink Siifu, bassist Rahsaan Carter, drummers Kojo Roney, Deantoni Parks, and more. *Red, Hot & Ra: The Magic City* hits retail on April 12th.

Red, Hot & Ra: The Magic City

1. Solipsistic Panacea (Black Antiques)

2. Departure Guide Of The 7 Sisters
 3. Bedlam Blues
 4. #9 Venus The Living Myth
 5. El-Soul The Companion, Traveler
 6. LQ1TY – 29 Years
 7. Yet Differently Not- Mars Hall
 8. Reproductive Manatees – Sunny Said Up!
 9. The World Of Shadow
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Meshell Ndegeocello: The Omnichord Real Book (Album Stream)



Credit: Charlie Gross

Meshell Ndegeocello's Blue Note debut *The Omnichord Real Book* is officially available. She is joined by collaborators Jason Moran, Cory Henry, Brandee Younger, Joel Ross, Joan As Policewoman, Julius Rodriguez, Thandiswa and more. The album is an epic composed of folk, funk, jazz and soul led by Ndegeocello's philosophical lyrics about emotional rejuvenation. She explained in a press release how the music was informed by the passing of her parents and the memories of them including her mother's ache and the Real Book gifted by her father. TOR has the melancholy of mourning but also stretches of instrumental passages that encourage healing because of the self-reflection that can come in the absence of words. The songs feel more like meditations on rebirth and letting go of the past with Ndegeocello keeping a pensive tone throughout. Charged moments like "Vuma" and "Burn Progression" shake off some of the gloom to offer snapshots of new life beginnings. The hourlong odyssey is a soundtrack for shedding old ways of seeing after learning from the pain of loss.

Dates

June 18: Terrace Theater @ The Kennedy Center – Washington, DC

June 20: The Ardmore Music Hall – Ardmore, PA

June 21: Blue Note Jazz Festival @ Sony Hall – New York, NY

June 23: Wasfest @ Boch Center – Boston, MA

July 29: Blue Note Jazz Festival Napa – Napa, CA

Aug. 11: We Out Here Festival – Wimborne, UK

Nov. 19: City Winery Pittsburgh – Pittsburgh, PA

Meshell Ndegeocello Releases The 5th Dimension Feat. Hawtplates



Meshell Ndegeocello's "The Fifth Dimension" featuring Hawtplates is the latest single to emerge from her upcoming *Omnichord Real Book* album. Hawtplates is a vocal group consisting of Justin Hicks, Kenita Miller-Hicks and Jade Hicks. "The Fifth Dimension" mines fusion and R&B to relay a message about love. The album is deeply inspired by the passing of her parents and the way her perspective on life changed plus the rediscovery of her first real book. The book is a collection of jazz standards that jazz musicians learn in order to master the genre. Her debut for the Blue Note label arrives on June 16th and the [tour](#) will start on June 7th.

<https://youtu.be/vxQml800cP4>

Meshell Ndegeocello Shares Vuma Feat. Thandiswa & Joel Ross



Meshell Ndegeocello gets into motion in the visualizer for the lively “Vuma.” South African vocalist Thandiswa and jazz mallet player Joel Ross are featured in the song. “Vuma” is another song from Ndegeocello’s upcoming *The Omnichord Real Book* album. The singer-songwriter and musician said, “This album is about the way we see old things in new ways.” She previously shared [“Virgo”](#) while announcing the new project which is her first on the legendary Blue Note label. The title is inspired by her new life perspective after the loss of her parents. While thinking about their lives she found the first Real Book she ever received as a gift from her father. That book and what she describes as her “mother’s ache” deeply informed her creative process this time. *The Omnichord Real Book* comes out June 16th.

