

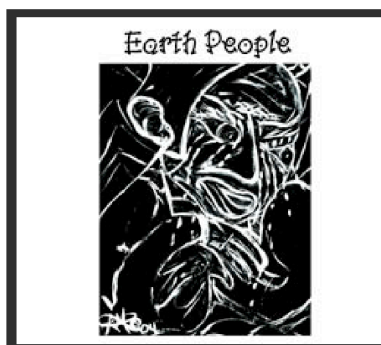


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Your Free Monthly Guide to the New York Jazz Scene

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Now Is Rising
Earth People (Undivided Vision)
By Florence Wetzel

It's time to welcome another offering from Earth People, one of the most innovative and exciting groups on today's avant garde scene. The group excels once again with the absolutely fresh *Now Is Rising*, a soulful amalgam of sound that showcases the group's versatility and formidable gifts. This incarnation of the group includes André Martinez on drums and percussion, Jason Candler on alto sax and guitar, Doug Principato on guitar, vocals and keyboards, François Grillot on contrabass, Mark Hennen on piano, Sabir Mateen on alto, tenor and alto clarinet, Elliott Levin on flute, tenor sax and vocals, Firehorse on electronics, Ricardo Solis on congas and M on vocals.

Earth People is renowned for its beautifully intense jams, but on *Now Is Rising* the songs are shorter, allowing the group to display an amazing range. The CD starts out with "Red Clay", a funky melodic outpouring with a mesmerizing groove by Grillot, Levin's boiling sax and M's impassioned vocals. Then "Small Distraction Mass Confusion" brings in an entirely different spirit, a free jazz jam where Mateen's fluid sax builds into a fiery solo without brakes. The next tune, "Now Is Rising", is a joyfully wild spoken word by Principato and Levin, as

well as chanting by the entire band. Then the group shifts to "M Train Samba", a delightful short piece bursting with Solis' congas and Hennen's high energy piano. Next is "Time To Vote!", another spoken word by M. The song features electronics, a vampy piano and Levin cooking on sax, creating an absolutely contemporary protest against the current out-of-control political climate. The sixth tune, "Sweet Peas", invokes Monk as well as the Blue Note sound, with Grillot setting up a rock solid groove and Mateen swinging light and loose. The CD closes with the unabashedly hard rocking "Draft Dodger". The song gets wild and woolly, mixing in electronic squiggles and rollicking solos.

What a CD! The listener never knows where the music is going next, which is part of the enjoyment. Yet *Now Is Rising* is not the least bit incohesive - what holds the CD together is the group's open-hearted spirit and courage, as well as its intention to create honest, passionate music. In this era of war and strife, Earth People stands as a shining example of the beauty and harmony human beings are capable of creating.