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## MUSICIANS

Michel Gentile :: FLUTE

Adam Kolker :: TENOR & SOPRANO SAXOPHONE

Yoon Sun Choi :: VOCALS
Kenny Wessel :: GUITAR
Daniel Kelly :: PIANO

Dave Ambrosio :: BASS

Rob Garcia :: DRUMS, PERCUSSION

Recorded by Peter Karl at Peter Karl Recording Studio, Brooklyn, NY Mixed by George Petit at Walker Studios, New York, NY Mastered by Emily Lazar at The Lodge, New York, NY Art Direction & Design by Elisa Garcia Bates, Paper collages by Ruby Garcia Produced by Rob Garcia and Bennett Paster



#### ROB GARCIA'S SANGHA HEART'S FIRE

It's normal to get an email from Rob Garcia announcing a startlingly diverse range of gigs: with mainstream-jazz guitarist Howard Alden one night, avant-garde luminary Joseph Jarman the next. But Garcia is not just a busy freelancer - he is one of a number of promising new drummer/composer/bandleaders, and part a new generation of jazz musicians dedicated to pushing past barriers of genre and style. He has worked extensively with proponents of early jazz, including the Manhattan Ragtime Orchestra. Vince Giordano's Nighthawks and Woody Allen's New Orleans Jazz Band (of Café Carlyle fame). He moves in creative New York circles with the likes of guitarist Joel Harrison and the Latin ensemble Grupo Yangui, featuring saxophonists Yosvany Terry and Chris Cheek. He's comfortable playing in freer settings with such esteemed artists as Myra Melford and Chris Chalfant, as well as Jarman's Lifetime Visions Orchestra. Place of Resonance, his 2001 debut recording, boasts players on the order of Dave Kikoski and Mike Formanek, And Mr. Kite, Garcia's repertory group devoted to the music of The Beatles, has showcased the talents of rising stars like tenor saxist Bill McHenry and pianist/organist Gary Versace.

In music and in life, Rob Garcia is a universalist. His spiritual quest, fired by his experiences at Jarman's Brooklyn Buddhist Association, led him to form a new band called Sangha, which makes its debut here with Heart's Fire. In Buddhism, Sangha means "community of truth seekers" and is one of the three pillars of the faith, along with Buddha and Dharma. "My goal was to convey experiences in my life related to my studies of

holistic healing and spirituality." Garcia explains. He launched the group roughly four years ago, and I happened to attend the very first performance, at New York's Cornelia Street Café. Immediately I was struck by the instrumentation: flute and reeds: quitar and piano: not just rhythm section but also vocals, belted by the versatile Yooni Choi. It was bassist Dave Ambrosio who brought Choi to Garcia's attention. "I wanted someone who would be a complete musician." Rob says. Choi delivered in spades, "My idea was not really to feature the vocals." Rob adds. "but rather to have them be part of the ensemble. Like in 'Coming Home,' parts of the melody are played instrumentally and other parts are expressed through vocals with lyrics. I also wanted someone who had more than just a jazz background. Yooni worked out great because she has a strong R&B feel, and she's well-versed in other global styles."

From the Nuvorican clave of "It's Ruby" to the bluesy soul of "Is It Me," from the Eastern tinge and ancient poetry of the title track to the ethereal musings and deep groove of the band's theme song "Sangha," the project is alive with gratitude for the gift of life. Flutist Michel Gentile, saxophonist Adam Kolker, pianist Daniel Kelly and guitarist Kenny Wessel are sensitive team players and virtuosic soloists who bring an expert touch to Garcia's fine arrangements (the introductory chorale on "Be a Lover" is a nice example). Lyric writing may be a new discipline for this drummer, but the results are moving in their directness and warmth. The balladic "Fresh" affirms our capacity to grow and to resist personal demons: "I can see that your big foe/is nothing but your twin soul." The session finale, "Thank

You," is something of a departure: a rubato theme and soundscape with wordless vocals. Garcia wrote it in 2000 on the way to a concert with Joseph Jarman. "I remember feeling very thankful," he recalls. My guess is that you will too.

David R. Adler

New York, November 2006

#### **BEGINNINGS**

And so the mo-ments come to pass / A new be-gining's here so fast / Who is that there my lov-er / Only with you can I un-cov-er / The mis-con-nec tions that were made / They dis-a-pear in-to the shade / The past does-n't have to be / The fu-ture of you and me / Be-gin-ing Be-gin-ing

#### IS IT ME

I look back and see your smiling face / Holding your arms open for a tight embrace / Some times I just can't help myself from needing you / You promise me joy and love and security too, / but I have grown to know that isn't true

Again you're here 'cause I opened the door / To your strength and power that knocks me on the floor. / In this world of fantasy I'm blinded all the time / Waking up to the present moment I can really shine / and free myself from the clutches of your bind

Wait what is this This newness Is it bliss? / It feels like nothing I have ever felt before / Is it me? Can this truly be? / There's a tunnel that starts at my heart / that goes deep into my soul. You can see me there / Free to love you.

I've come to know myself a bit / But I still at times I get stuck in the shit / This life sometimes feels like an

endless source of pain / But when I look a bit deeper, and feel my inner flame / I scream for joy and act like I'm insane!

#### IT'S RUBY

It's Ruby, so precious / Ruby, a little jewel / Coming for a renewal of life, for all. / There is rain, skies are gray / but i know this is a gorgeous day / We're awaiting a little sunshine / a gem / Here she comes, soft and round / I've never heard a more beautiful sound / It's a queen of a new kingdom / who's here to bless us with / two tons of happiness

#### CHORUS

It's Ruby, so precious / Ruby, like a rare gem / a budding rose on a stem / brand new / It's Ruby, so precious / Ruby, a little jewel / coming for a renewal / of life, for all.

So pristine, Ruby-bean / I could gaze your eyes till your fifteen / It's a debut, yet so familiar / to me / Have we met, once before / many years back on a distant shore / From the Artist, you are a present / so special to my heart / a perfect work of art

(CHORUS)

Now we're three, It's Ruby

(REPEAT)

## HEART'S FIRE

Ever since Happiness heard your name / It has been running through the streets / trying to find you.. / And several times in the past week / God himself has come to my door / So sweetly asking for your address / Wanting the beautiful warmth / of your hearts fire.

# COMING HOME

Now there's no more fruit to fill my bowl / How will I pay the toll / I can hear your voice chanting in a drone /and I am coming home. / and the simple way is not easy / but I need to be me. / Coming home it's where I'm free. / Coming home has filled my bowl with fire / to find my way simply.

## SANGHA

Out of nothingness a child is born / Into a world which seems so torn / He learns to survive with out much to say. / But betrays himself day after day. / In this crowded world he stands alone / Thinks his truth is not to be shown. / Then one day he hears a Friend. / And so he sees there's nothing to defend

### CHORUS

Hook around what do I see? Sangha / People seeking truth like me. Sangha / Opening your heart is the key. Sangha / In togetherness we can be free. Sangha / Follow the sacred melody

## (REPEAT)

We all have so much to share / Who are we to judge what's there / Our friends show us who we are / Sometimes it's sweet sometimes it's hard.

(CHORUS)

## BE A LOVER

Hey I'm calling you / It's been so long what's stalling you / I can't wait to see your great heart soar / Be a Lover, Wait no more

Fall has turned to snow / but that's no reason to let your love go / Have you heard you must believe in spring / Be a Lover, No waiting

There a world that's so full of life. / Say yes and open the door / Don't be a fool, there are no rules, / Only to choose. There's no more Blues

When you hold my hand / Now take your friends to the promise land / Oh how hard it is when you're a stray / Be a Lover, Live today, Be a Lover, Give yourself away

### FRESH

I can see the sunlight flowing through your eyes / I can feel the warming of your heart / Like a newborn baby's cry / Life can be so fresh / and every thing seems to mesh within yourself and without

And the thing that weighed on your heart all these years / Changes from a lion to a mouse / You can see that your big foe / is nothing but your twin soul / and you stick around to face it whole

Now I've heard tales / 'bout heros fighting bad / They kill men for what's right / but real heros know the source is all within / and with their strength they will spread more light

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