Weather Report – I Sing The Body Electric (1972)



01. Unknown Soldier (Josef Zawinul) – 7:55 02. The Moors (Wayne Shorter) – 4:40 03. Crystal (Miroslav Vitouš) – 7:18 04. Second Sunday In August (Zawinul) – 4:09 play *05. Medley: Vertical Invader (Zawinul)/T.H.(Vitouš)/Dr.Honoris Causa (Zawinul) – 10:40 06. Surucucú (Shorter) – 7:41 07. Directions (Zawinul) – 4:34*

Personnel: - Joe (Josef) Zawinul - electric & acoustic keyboards - Wayne Shorter - reeds - Miroslav Vitouš - bass - Eric Gravátt - drums - Dom Um Romão - percussion + - Andrew White - english horn (01) - Hubert Laws Jr. - flute - Wilmer Wise - trumpet - Ralph Towner - 12-string guitar (02) - Yolande Bavan, Joshie Armstrong, Chapman Roberts – vocals

Like the weather itself, this band would assume a new shape with virtually every release -- and this album, half recorded in the studio and half live in Tokyo, set the pattern of change. Exit Airto Moreira and Alphonse Mouzon; enter percussionist Dom Um Romao, drummer Eric Gravatt, and a slew of cameo guests like guitarist Ralph Towner, flutist Hubert Laws, and others. The studio tracks are more biting, more ethnically diverse in influence, and more laden with electronic effects and grandiose structural complexities than before. The live material (heard in full on the import Live in Tokyo) is even fiercer and showcases for the first time some of the tremendous drive WR was capable of, though it doesn't give you much of an idea of its stream of consciousness nature. --- Richard S. Ginell, allmusic.com

Wayne Shorter and Joe Zawinul were arguably the two geniuses most responsible for Miles Davis's development from the mid-sixties into his electric period that revolutionized jazz in the seventies. Shorter constantly pushed the music forward with his adventurous compositions for Davis's "second great quintet" (some fantastic music there) and participated in "In a Silent Way" and "Bitches Brew" which launched fusion. Zawinul was the mastermind behind many

compositions in the electric Miles period and helped define the different sounds that were to come from keyboardists in this style. Then the two left Miles to do things their own way, and thus they started Weather Report. Their first album, self-titled, was filled with fascinating quick sketches of new musical ideas capitalizing on the new palette of sounds that came from electronics. This album continued those experiments, but in a more developed and profound way. "Unknown Soldier" in particular is a masterpiece in angular, unconventional composition that manages to be beautiful and very challenging. "The Moors" features an appearance by guitarist Ralph Towner who plays an improvised introduction filled with ideas and lines nobody had ever thought of before, while managing to be extremely funky in some spots. I read that Towner was practicing some ideas for his intro, and Zawinul was concerned that he would be overly self-conscious when actually being recorded, so they recorded Towner practicing for the intro without his knowledge. It was good enough that they actually used his run-through, and when he finally said "okay, I'm ready," they told him he was already done.

The second half of the album is edited down from a performance in Tokyo, and the energy of the band in a live setting is astounding. They do an electrifying version of "Directions," the tune Zawinul wrote for Miles which became Miles's signature piece during his electric period. There's something angularly funky and otherworldly about this very simple melody and the way they play it.

The unfortunate thing about this album is expectations after the fact. Weather Report had only a cult following at this time, so the sound associated with this band from their later recordings is nowhere near what this album sounds like. This music is a lot closer to electric Miles, though it backs off a bit from the rock rhythms and focuses more on the headier aspects of the electronics. As a result, the music is very esoteric and difficult to approach even from familiarity with later Weather Report. If you find the description of this album interesting and want to appreciate it, explore Miles in the late sixties up through "In a Silent Way" and "Bitches Brew," and then get the first Weather Report album, the self-titled one. This is very deep, exploratory music that is completely enthralling for those people who know how to listen to it. Become one of those people. --- Michael Hardin, amazon.com

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