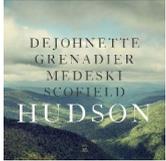


Jack DeJohnette, Larry Grenadier, John Medeski & John Scofield - Hudson (2017)

Written by bluesever

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Jack DeJohnette, Larry Grenadier, John Medeski & John Scofield - Hudson (2017)



01. Hudson 10:55 02. El Swing 05:28 03. Lay Lady Lay 08:16 04. Woodstock 05:59 05. A Hard Rain's a-Gonna Fall 09:13 06. Wait Until Tomorrow 05:28 07. Song for World Forgiveness 08:35 08. Dirty Ground 03:58 09. Tony Then Jack 05:03 10. Up on Cripple Creek 05:35 11. Great Spirit Peace Chant 03:16 Jack DeJohnette - drums Larry Grenadier - bass keyboardist John Medeski - keyboards John Scofield – guitar

This all-star band calls themselves Hudson, named after the Hudson River Valley they each call home. Drummer Jack DeJohnette, bassist Larry Grenadier, keyboardist John Medeski, and guitarist John Scofield team up to celebrate their musical histories and Jack's 75th birthday year in a tour de force of creative interplay. Fans know them as hard swinging jazz masters, deft and creative jam purveyors, rocking funky groove maestros, each musician at the top of his game. It's rare that so impressive a group of individuals finds time away from their own projects to tour together. True to the spirit of the project's name, they have collected a repertoire of Hudson Valley materials from Bob Dylan and The Band to the Woodstock Festival's Joni Mitchell anthem and blues-rock-soul from Jimi Hendrix. Their June 2017 album release and performances will feature original compositions as well, inspired by their surrounds and each other. This is a band with wide ranging appeal. ---bouldertheater.com

Too often, musicians of this caliber who come together under the particular umbrella of a "project" find the end result muddled by any number of difficulties, from individual egos to production excesses. Thankfully, none of that is the case with Hudson, the collective recording by the all-star, multi-generational quartet of drummer Jack DeJohnette, bassist Larry Grenadier, keyboardist John Medeski, and guitarist John Scofield. The album title has a two-fold meaning: It signifies the geographical region in upstate New York where these players currently reside,

and highlights the notion that the area has always offered a place of solace for artists -- especially musicians. The latter is reflected in the choice of covers here.

The mood throughout is loose and conversational. These guys play songs they love to discover what else is inside them. The collective's lengthy title-track opening jam emerges from a funky bass and drum vamp, and evolves into something akin to the early electric music by Miles Davis via Medeski's wonky organ and electric piano sounds and Scofield's deeply rhythmic playing style. The entire band works that vamp to the point where it becomes something wholly other. Grenadier's playing is remarkable not for what he plays, but for how his woody grooves are so deep they build a dancefloor for the others to move on. Scofield's "El Swing" is a lithe, slippery, post-bop number with a lovely melody steeped in blues. There are four covers in a row. First is a reggae-cum-soul-jazz take on Bob Dylan's "Lay Lady Lay," where Medeski does his best Jackie Mitoo, while Scofield layers the lyric line with a biting tenderness and the rhythm section cuts deep. Joni Mitchell's "Woodstock" builds on the wispy mystery in the original with a beautiful, bluesy, acoustic piano solo by Medeski, and Scofield's quotations from "Eleanor Rigby." Dylan's "A Hard Rain's Gonna Fall" becomes a vehicle for intimate and edgy exploration utilizing psychedelia, swing rhythms, Scofield's more angular rock abstractions -- which always return to the blues -- and Medeski's spacy chord voicings. Jimi Hendrix is represented by "Wait Until Tomorrow," in which the quartet uncover the R&B grooves underneath its rock exterior. Of the remaining originals, DeJohnette's "Song for World Forgiveness" is a highlight for its laid-back tempo and reflective but emphatic interaction between pianist and guitarist. Scofield's "Tony Then Jack" has an uptempo swagger with a knotty organ, a bouncy, walking bassline, and skittering snare work from DeJohnette, while the Band's "Up on Cripple Creek" reveals the NOLA funk at its core. Hudson is a modern update that harkens back -- in feel -- to the great Blue Note sessions of the '60s, when a group of jazz masters could come together to play good music and let off some steam. We need more records like this. ---Thom Jurek, AllMusic Review

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