

David Murray Infinity Quartet - Be My Monster Love (2013)

Written by bluesever

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1. *French Kiss for Valerie* 6:56 2. *Be My Monster Love (feat. Macy Gray)* 6:35 3. *Stressology* 6:45 4. *Army of the Faithful (feat. Gregory Porter)* 6:19 5. *Sorrow Song* 8:58 6. *About the Children (feat. Gregory Porter)* 7:49 7. *The Graduate (feat. Bobby Bradford)* 5:41 8. *Hope Is a Thing With Feathers (feat. Gregory Porter)* 7:19 Personnel: David Murray - tenor sax Marc Cary - piano, organ Jariu Shahid - bass Nasheet Waits - drums Bobby Bradford - cornet (7) Macy Gray - vocals Gregory Porter – vocals

David Murray's last Motema Music offering, *Plays Nat King Cole en Español*, wowed listeners with its inventive reading of the music from the great singer's two Spanish-language albums with a Cuban ensemble. On *Be My Monster Love*, Murray unveils his Infinity Quartet (named for the jazz loft he and Stanley Crouch operated in New York in the 1970s) with pianist/organist Marc Cary, drummer Nasheet Waits, and bassist Jaribu Shahid. While a Latin-tinged groove on opener "French Kiss for Valerie" sets the tone in post-bop terms, this is a varied affair that showcases the many aspects of the tradition Murray embodies in both his playing and arranging. He provides a link between an Ellington-ian elegance and the deep, gospel-influenced emotionalism of Albert Ayler, the soulful, melodic, inquisitive investigations of Ben Webster, and the modal openness of John Coltrane. The title track features Macy Gray (the first of three tunes here with lyrics by writer Ishmael Reed), offering her raw, sensual vocal on a fingerpopping swinger. Gregory Porter makes three appearances as well, first on the nearly gospel-ized R&B of "Army of the Faithful (Joyful Noise)," driven by Cary's B-3 and recalling Murray's Special Quartet with the late Don Pullen. The midtempo "Sorrow Song" is actually a deeply moving ballad with the saxophonist offering a rounded warmth in his tone as Waits' skittering cymbals set the groove. Rich, modal soul and Latin rhythms underpin Porter's vocal on "About the Children," with lyrics by Last Poet Abiodun Oyewole. Shahid's bassline is a propulsive glue, holding seemingly disparate elements together in a glorious whole. Murray's former teacher, trumpeter Bobby Bradford, guests with the quartet on the skillfully skewed blues walk that is "The Graduate." But the set's finest moment is on the nearly straight-ahead sprint that is "Stressology," with Murray getting in some of his most fleet-fingered lines and righteous groans. The interplay between Cary's piano and Shahid's bass is breathtaking. *Be My Monster Love* is a diverse, travel modern creative jazz through a prismatic lens. While Murray's

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compositions are tighter and more song-like than ever (the presence of these excellent vocalists highlights this), he simultaneously offers a group of stellar players the opportunity (collectively and individually) to shine and push their margins. Highly recommended. ---Thom Jurek, Rovi

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