



Fusion Jazz, Jazz, Uncategorized—February 10, 2013 at 9:03 am

Saffron – *dawning* (2013)

by [Jordan Richardson](#)

As a collision of creative impulses, *Saffron* is something special. Perhaps best described as kindred spirits from across the musical divide, this collective of artists takes to *dawning* with a spirit of openness and reverence seldom heard.

The record comes as an interpretation of some of the works of Persian Sufi poet Rumi through the musical dialogue generated by Katayoun Goudarzi (vocals), Shujaat Khan (sitar, vocals), Kevin Hays (piano), Tim Ries (saxophone, clarinet, Hungarian folk flute), and Abhiman Kaushal (tabla).

The possible contradictions in the melodic realm, with Ries from the worlds of jazz and rock and the Grammy-nominated Khan carrying diverse traditions, melt the instant these individuals get together to make music.

“It makes sense to engage both East and West, to use both to express the poems,” says Goudarzi. “Unity and love are the most fundamental parts of Rumi’s poetry. We could, of course, use the same music that was considered Sufi music, forever and ever for another 800 years. But it’s a different world now, a new opportunity for interaction...why not try to transcribe it in our own way?”

The resulting spring of modern interaction found on *dawning* is at once a meditative and invigorating experience, proving that elements of fire and water need not be at odds. The congress of tones and textures played through dissolve at times, like with the prayerfully haunting 20-minute title track, but the impetus is the same throughout.

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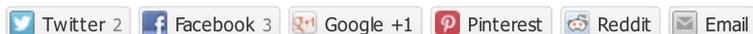
The pieces of *dawning* come as single takes and are presented in the order they were recorded in (for the most part), so that really gives the album a sense of wholeness. When the title track quickens through Kaushal's drive and blends into the warm glow of "The Inquisitor," you're hearing transition. As Goudarzi's tones take to Rumi's poetry, her vocal exchanges with Khan are organic.

Then there's "Tease," a piece birthed by Khan's sitar and blessed through further engagement with Ries' saxophone. Hays enters as well, building to a classical call-and-response session that speaks to the expert interactivity between players.

An instinctive, earnest expression of poetry and music, *dawning* is a special record for those looking to expand their borders. By blending traditions of jazz and world music, Saffron speaks to the illimitable glow within all of us. The sometimes anxious search for something beyond lukewarm nomenclature, for a notion that encourages defiance of all genre confines, finds rest here.



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