Malia & Boris Blank - Convergence (2014)

01. Celestial Echo (4:08) 02. Embraceable Moon (4:11) 03. I Feel It Like You (3:42) 04. Touching Ghosts (3:21) 05. Claire Cadillac (3:12) 06. Raising Venus (4:40) 07. Fever (3:28) 08. Smouldering Ashes (3:58) 09. Magnetic Lies (4:01) 10. Tears Run Dry (3:41) 11. Turner's Ship (6:43)

The king in Yello is back for his first collaboration in twenty-two years with some of the most stirring electro-jazz you'll find outside of a Twin Peaks soundtrack. Yello has always been presented from a very male-dominated perspective, which is not exactly a surprise. The world of Dieter Meier and Boris Blank has long been known for the pitched-down vocal stylings of their '81 cut "Oh Yeah", an aural slice of minimalistic low-end that works just as well in a grind-heavy disco as it does to soundtrack a principal's defeat. But it's necessary to separate Blank's work with Yello from this—his first collaborative work since the 1992 Billy McKenzie album Outernational. Though the instrumentals on Convergence bear many trademarks of the lighter sides of, for instance, 2009′s Touch Yello, Malawian singer Malia lends them an entirely different vibe than Meier's uniquely smokey, melancholic baritone.

Of course, it just wouldn't be a Blank canvas if the setting wasn't drenched in the aura of after-hours jazz lounge of yesterday, and once again he paints a masterpiece of thickly-coated synthesized strings and ghostly percussion. The production values are, predictably, top-notch; if Blank has learned anything in his decades of music-making, it's how to create atmosphere—and there's plenty to spare on Convergence. There's an out-of-time quality to the eleven tracks here, the same mysterious sort of implacable elegance one might find in the heavenly bodies that emerges from the opening sway of "Celestial Echo"and into "Embraceable Moon"'s fragile skitteriness. It's easy to see why the two artists felt like a collaboration would be a good fit. Malia's vocals have just enough roughness to wear Blank's compositions comfortably and confidently, whether she's wrenching the heart on "Turner's Ship", themed around Joseph Mallord William Turner's famed "The Slave Ship", or healing it with the supernatural sultriness of "Touching Ghosts". ---Shannon Glass, electronicbeats.net

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