

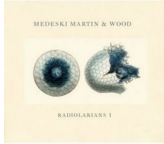
## Medeski, Martin & Wood - Radiolarians I (2008)

Written by bluesever

Monday, 19 October 2009 15:16 - Last Updated Wednesday, 04 February 2015 09:51

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### Medeski, Martin & Wood - Radiolarians I (2008)



01. *First Light*
02. *Cloud Wars*
03. *Muchas Gracias*
04. *Professor Nohair*
05. *Reliquary*
06. *Free Go Lily*
07. *Rolling Son*
08. *Sweet Pea Dreams*
09. *God Fire*
10. *Hidden Moon*

John Medeski: Organ Hammond B3, piano, Mellotron, Clavinet Hohner, Mini Moogs;  
Chris Wood: Bass;  
Billy Martin: Drums, Percussion.

Arguably the coolest and most creative instrumental trio of our times released the initial album of a projected trilogy in September 2008, and at first exposure I'm tempted to call it their strongest, most varied effort to date. Confirmed fans will likely have even their highest expectations surpassed, and newcomers may find it the perfect introduction to the band's unique sound: an eclectic blend of (among other things) acoustic New Orleans jazz, electronic post-rock experimentation, and galactic trip-hop funk...a bizarre mix to be sure, but it all fits together with organic ease.

Appropriately, the album opener 'First Light' is arranged almost like a MMW primer. It begins with a harsh electric improvisation, segues into an eerie but infectious groove sparked by one of

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the trio's patented quasi hip-hop vibes, and finally trails off into a free-form space out, after another quintessential jam spotlighting John Medeski's deft handling of his Hammond B3.

'Cloud Wars' emphasizes the heavier side of the group, with an aggressive distorted bass guitar solo by Chris Wood recalling the monster riffing of John Wetton in his mid-'70s prime with KING CRIMSON.

Some bluesy melodic and acoustic guitar give a Southwestern roots flavor to 'Muchas Gracias', with extra Prog Rock legitimacy provided by a subtle wash of Mellotron. And good luck trying to follow the beat of drummer Billy Martin's gut-punching 'Reliquary', a nearly eight-minute assault in which even the acoustic piano is employed for its percussive accents.

I've gone into some detail describing the first few cuts to suggest the boundless range and variety of the MMW sound. I'll leave you to discover the unexpected pleasures elsewhere on the album, with one ear eagerly tuned to Part Two of the series. It's a shopworn cliché to say 'expect the unexpected', but with a band like Medeski, Martin & Wood you really don't have any other choice. ---Neumann, progarchives.com

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