

## Review: Omar Sosa & Seckou Keita, 'Transparent Water'

Felix Contreras February 16, 2017

Omar Sosa seemingly can do no wrong.

Every album the jazz pianist releases is, if not exactly better than the last, arguably more profound. His exploration of Afro-Cuban music in all of its forms ends up sounding like an intense Yoruban meditation on life cycles and existence. His piano is not a musical instrument but a conduit to spiritual awareness. Live and on record, I'm often transported and seduced by his music, which reaches for the sublime and eternal. (Can you tell I'm a fan?)

And just when I thought "No, way, he can't keep raising the bar with every release!" along comes *Transparent Water*, a record co-credited to Senegalese kora master Seckou Keita.

The music instantaneously transports listeners from the very first notes. But in addition to journeys within, there are real world travels across the globe on this album. The cast includes: Venezuelan percussionist Gustavo Ovalles; Silk Road member and Chinese sheng master Wu Tong; and Mieko Miyazaki on the Japanese koto. What could have been a multi-culti mess is instead a powerfully elegant statement of joy over shared musical discovery.

I'll leave you with this: While living with this album for some time before I tried to put words to my fascination, I often imagined Omar Sosa lifted up to the Yoruban spirits in the form of a swarm of butterflies. Such is the beauty of his musical spirit.

<https://www.npr.org/2017/02/16/515247358/first-listen-omar-sosa-seckou-keita-transparent-water>