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Copernicus: CIPHER and DECIPHER

Un-Comprehensible

What?!? This was the first thought that crossed my mind the first time I put on *Cipher and Decipher*. The music is a confusing mix of music, poetry, and one really annoying voice. I still don't exactly know what Copernicus, yes that's his name, was trying to accomplish with this album, but if it was utter confusion, he sure accomplished that!

The amount of musicians on this album is staggering, 15 to be exact, and they are very good. I thought I would talk about what I know first, and then get to the oddness that is Copernicus. In the background of each song there is a whole woodwind section comprised of almost every wind instrument. Ranging from tenor sax to trombone to even a tuba, Copernicus's backing band is very talented, and it definitely shows. Matty Fillou, the tenor saxophonist, is perhaps my favorite of them all, mainly because I play sax and I have a better ear for that than any other wind instrument. His skill on 'Free at Last' is exceptional during his solo near the end of the track. I also like the diverse guitars that are used throughout which include not only the regular electric and acoustic guitars but steel guitars, played by Bob Hoffnar, as well. A violin makes an appearance on a couple of the tracks, and is played quite well.



Now the vocals, if you could call them that. They are very weird, chant like verses which are taken straight from poetry written by Copernicus himself. They are very, very avant-garde and are kind of creepy at parts, especially when coupled with the minor tones of the background music. The jazz-funk background backs up his lyrics perfectly, but the overall effect is one that is very confusing and slightly disturbing. Songs such as 'I Don't Believe' and 'Into the Subatomic' showcase Copernicus's way with words, which if followed show that most of the songs on the album are about the same subject: the universe.

The production is done very well by James Frazze. The woodwinds sound excellent when pared with the vocals and guitars, all lending to a great tone, and sound.

Cipher and Decipher is definitely the weirdest album I have listened to yet in 2011, and will probably stay at the top throughout the year. Combining jazz-funk, Latin, and even some Middle Eastern influences this is definitely a cool album, yet one that still is a question mark in my mind. I think you have to be in the mood for this kind of thing, unless you really like avant-garde stuff, but if you're in the right mood it's a pretty good album. For his odd, yet kind of enjoyable release Copernicus gets 3 stars.

Track Listing

1. Into the Subatomic
2. Free at Last!
3. Mud Becomes Mind
4. I Don't Believe
5. Matter is Energy
6. Comprehensible
7. Infinite Strength
8. Where No One Can Win
9. Step Out of Your Body
10. The Cauldron

Added: April 20th 2011
Reviewer: **Brian Block**

Score: ★★ ★

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