

Cadence

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EARTH PEOPLE NOW IS RISING UNDIVIDED VISION 4.

*Red Clay** / *Small Distraction Mass Confusion*^h / *Now Is Rising**
/ *M Train Samba* / *Time To Vote!** / *Sweet Peas*^h / *Draft Dodger*.*

Andre Martinez, d, steel drum, cocktail set, perc; Jason Candler, as, g; Doug Principato, g, kybds, vcl; Mark Hennen, p; Francois Grillot, b; *Elliott Levin, flt, ts, vcl; ^Sabir Mateen, as, ts, a cl; ^Firehorse, electronics; (on selected tracks) Ricardo Solis, conga; M, vcl. 10/04, New York City, NY.

My introduction to Earth People was their first album, *Waking the Living*, which was a lengthy, meandering statement (both musically and political) that was diluted by a lack of focus. They subsequently issued two other releases that I've not heard but were well-reviewed in this magazine. However, their latest, *Now Is Rising*, is a different story from the first. On this disc, a studio session, the program consists of shorter tracks which works to the group's advantage. The performances are more focused and there's a greater variety to the disc as a whole.

The album opens with "Red Clay" a fine, groove-oriented piece (not to be confused with the Freddie Hubbard piece by the same name) and a feature for vocalist M. Her wordless singing mingles with the saxophones of Candler and Levin and they engage in a spiraling dialogue complimented by Mark Hennen's piano. Hennen's piano introduces "Small Distraction ...," a free piece. It's a track that once again features sterling group interplay and also contains a powerful Sabir Mateen solo on tenor. Once again, it's the focus of the band that makes this piece so effective. The title track is the most arranged piece with several sections, including a spoken word piece by Levin and group chanting. "Sweet Peas" is a swinging track and probably the most traditionally Jazz-oriented piece. It even opens with a "Straight No Chaser" quote from Grillot. The track contains good simultaneous soloing from Candler and Mateen. And the album concludes with "Draft Dodger," a surprisingly effective rock rave-up.

All in all, *Now Is Rising* is a much-improved recording over their first.

Robert Iannapollo