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CD REVIEW: Ola Onabulé - *It's The Peace That Deafens*



Ola Onabulé - *It's The Peace That Deafens*
(Dot Time. DT9045. CD review by Mary James)

It's The Peace That Deafens is the eighth album by singer **Ola Onabulé** and it transports us back to his Nigerian roots. With the band (listed below) providing classy backing, the album is as rich as his African heritage. The sublime and subtle title ballad expresses in a few words the sensation of what happens when you are not true to yourself, if you do not speak out against injustice:

"Gentle words, shrewd and false from lips that betray way deep... beaten down, deadened pulse...where defeat lives...."

This is a dilemma explored by African novelists such as Chinua Achebe too, the clash and tug of war between old ways and new. But it is an African pulse (and to some extent a Bossa Nova and bluesy lilt) that drives this full-of-life album with melodies that soar and stay with you for a long time. They are powered by a beautiful clear voice that is both intimate and tender yet stadium-filling. It is a unique voice.

There is an underlying notion of Onabulé taking full ownership of the African heritage in his background after years of imbalance responding to Western music more than African. So we hear percussive upbeat highlife and Jùjú, popular music forms in Ghana and Nigeria, combined with cool Finnish brass. The 12 piece band provides very African sounding backing (and clapping to great effect). There are stories such as the powerful and catchy *Jankoriko* which describes the killing of a man because he was a thief, and references to

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African gods. And the profoundly touching love song *The Girl That She Was* about the maturing of a relationship and its inevitable end, and the tender *Love Again*. And sharp-eyed commentary on political leaders.

Onabulé says his ideas for composition come from being around people, that everyone has a profound single pearl of wisdom learned through personal pain and experience. And he certainly expresses these truths in a wide range of subjects and emotions. He says he wishes that composition came more easily, that he is not prepared to wait in case easy does not come around. But in this album, it has come easily, there is a feeling of coming home, of peace and serenity. This is a very beautiful album with thoughtful lyrics, full of deep humanity and sensitivity where the artist is well supported by a superlative band.

Mary James, who lives in Gloucestershire, is a jazz promoter and artist manager. Twitter [@marylearnington](#)

MUSICIANS: Performers: Ola Onabulé, Vocals; Jukka Eskola, Trumpet; Villu Veski, Saxophone; Snake Davis, Flute; Ross Stanley & Pete Adams, Keyboards, Piano, Hammond Organ; John Parricelli & Femi Temowo: Guitar; Phil Mulford: Bass; Jack Pollitt, Chris Nickolls & Ralph Salmins: Drums; Will Fry: Percussion.

On [Monday, October 12, 2015](#)

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Anonymous [13 October 2015 at 09:09](#)

Saw Ola & his band for the first time open Diana Krall Concert at the Royal Albert Hall, recently. Goodness grief what a fantastic surprise. To be quite honest, loved every single song, original, beautifully sung, poetic he was simply in full harmony with the band, true talent. We had to remind ourselves that they were apparently supporting the actual concert, but they justified every second on the stage. Royal Albert Hall, you need to offer them a full gig, they were worth seeing ALONE.

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