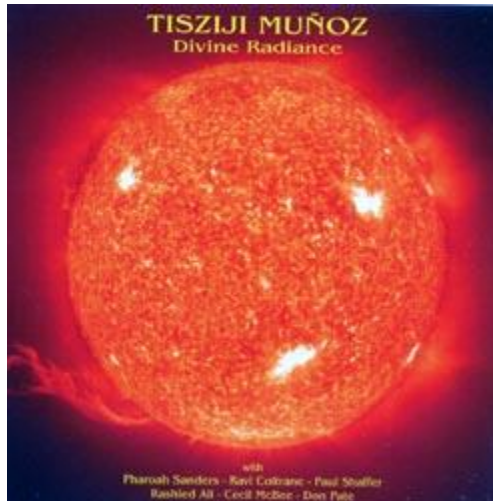


The Squids Ear

Tisziji Muñoz/Pharaoh Sanders/Rashied Ali/Don Pate/Paul Schaffer/Ravi Coltrane *Divine Radiance*

[review by Eyal Hareuveni](#)

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There are many free-minded musicians, including guitarists, who are identifying themselves with the legacy of latter-day John Coltrane. Think of volcanic eruptions of the late guitarist Sonny Sharrock, who, like guitarist Tisziji Muñoz, played with Coltrane's band members drummer Elvin Jones and saxophonist Pharoah Sanders on his masterpiece 'Ask The Ages'. Think of the younger guitarist Nels Cline who recorded an excellent interpretation of Coltrane's 'Interstellar Space' with drummer Gregg Bendian. But Muñoz's fascination with the latter-day John Coltrane is going deeper and sometimes even bordering with incest. On his new disc, he brought along Sanders, Coltrane's last

drummer, Rashied Ali, and his son, saxophonist Ravi Coltrane. Muñoz even writes in the liner notes that this recording should be an "acknowledgement of what was to be passed from Pharoah to Ravi". But Muñoz's innocence, conviction and even plain spiritualism and mysticism transcends any doubts about the mission that Muñoz has taken.

Divine Radiance is the first Muñoz disc on a label other than his own Anami Music since 1978's *Rendezvous with Now* (India Navigation). The record develops gradually, opening with two peaceful, even meditative pieces: the brief "Moment of Truth," where Muñoz doubles on synth, and the 16-minute "Visiting This Planet- Leaving This Planet." Both are beautiful, and display an interest in the earlier Atlantic recordings by Coltrane. Things begin to warm up on the third piece, "Initiation By Fire," where Sanders shows that his recent forays into Bill Laswell-produced discs were quite misleading about the state of his playing. The fourth piece, 'Fatherhood' is a gentle, angular, piece for guitar and synth that does not fit with the rest of the material on the disc.

The final, titular track is really the piece I was waiting to hear, a collective, muscular, free improvisation. Quoting Muñoz, it is really a "baptism by Heart-centered fire-Sound". Sanders blows like he did on Coltrane's 'Live at the Village Vanguard Again!' almost forty years ago. Ali shows how great a drummer he still is. Ravi Coltrane, who hardly ventures into free playing on his own discs, fits in, surprisingly, quite easily. Producer and keyboard player, Paul Schaffer, the musical director of *The Late Show with David Letterman* and a longtime associate and admirer of Muñoz, augments the band mainly through his synthesizer and organ playing. Muñoz, needless to say, is a virtuoso player, but his playing delivers more. It brings a feeling of purity, a deep honesty, truly divine.