

## Dhafer Youssef & Wolfgang Muthspiel

### Glow

release date: 5th November

plus live:

10th Nov 2007, **LSO St Luke's**, Old Street, London EC1V 9NG, £12, 8pm

"The quieter Muthspiel gets, the more deafening the sound of a dropped pin. Muthspiel's patient musicality and the meticulousness with which he releases even the smallest sound are his secrets. Everything he plays sounds essential" **The Guardian**

"Youssef's music continues to cast a considerable spell" **Mojo**

Austrian guitarist **Wolfgang Muthspiel** has been making a name for himself as one of Europe's finest musicians. An endlessly resourceful, subtle, always hugely listenable player his reputation has soared over a series of extraordinary albums for his own label **Material Records**. Recordings that have featured him as a solo performer, with the brilliant singer **Rebekka Bakken** or in powerhouse trio with bassist **Marc Johnson** and drummer **Brian Blade**. But now at last Muthspiel has made an album with the brilliant French-based Tunisian oud player and singer **Dhafer Youssef**, with whom he first recorded on Youssef's breakthrough album *Electric Sufi* way back in 2001. Indeed Muthspiel was in the band that Youssef brought to the Spitz in London the following year for his first ever UK performance. But the musicians are united by more than their friendship and previous work together but also by a shared musical ideal. Both of them internalised the musical traditions of their home countries before going on long journeys to the far reaches of jazz and kindred musical forms, eventually arriving at a style which is divorced from all outside preconceptions, categories or artificial formats.

Their album "**Glow**" is a duo album, and yet it isn't, as both protagonists enter into direct and virtual dialogue with a number of guests. "Glow" is also a live album, and yet it isn't. All the pieces are based on improvisations and real-time sequences, which have, however, undergone multiple metamorphoses in the studio. "***I've always been fascinated with Dhafer's expression as a singer***", says Wolfgang Muthspiel, describing his preparations for *Glow*. "***I wanted to create different surroundings for this expression, especially in my musical and harmonic language. Essentially, we got together for a few days and worked out three pieces. Everything else came out of an improvisational process. We slowly carved out the pieces from our improvisations. It wasn't the usual jazz-style working process where you go into the studio for three days, and you're finished. We were going for the long haul. It was thrilling for me to try and inspire Dhafer's singing. As a musician, Dhafer doesn't take a lot of verbal suggestions. You have to seduce him to make sure he feels comfortable in the music he plays.***"

But Muthspiel doesn't just provide Youssef with new surroundings, he also ventures into completely different sonic areas himself. His playing on *Glow* is beautifully understated and he constructs backdrops, designs the dramatic structure and provides each song with an unmistakable ambience. "***I enjoyed the process of directing,***" is how the guitarist sums it up. "***It's as if we made a film together, and then I did the edit. Of course, I am hugely influenced by who I am playing with, and Dhafer's sound is so strong that he provokes an immediate reaction in my style. I am always on the lookout for music which is so powerful that I don't have to think about anything except to follow the impulse which is present in the room.***"

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