



May 2010

THE VINSON VALEGA GROUP

## BIOPHILIA

CP1104

Consilience Productions

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*I Knew You'd Say That; Sunset and the Mockingbird; A Moment of Silence; Biophilia; Let; Day By Day with Kathelin Gray; I Just Wanted to See What You Look Like; Charm; November Spring; Always; Talk Time; Strange; Think of One; Doesn't It Feel Great to Be Alive?*

PERSONNEL: Anton Denner, alto saxophone, flute; Chris Bacas, tenor and soprano saxophone; Mark Miller, trombone; Matthew Fries, piano, Fender Rhodes; Gary Wang, bass; Vinson Valega, drums.

### By Matt Marshall

Rarely is an album's title track also one of its shortest. Rarer still is one you can completely miss by stepping to the fridge for your favorite beverage. But that's exactly what drummer Vinson Valega gives us here with the 55-second "Biophilia," a sax and steel drum number that pulses with what could instantly be labeled "enviro-music" – you know, that which conjures images of rain forests and bearded gurus tilting rainsticks. But before you can say "played" the tune is over, reminding how close we are to it all really going down like that. But the record is far from doom-and-gloom. In fact, Valega refashions the "Biophilia" tune in the equally brief "Charm" and "Strange," inciting us to reacquaint ourselves with the odd, endless magic of the universe and our time within it, however short.

Elsewhere, on originals and standards alike, the group maintains an acute sense of living and enjoying the moment. Yet perhaps the most affecting tunes are Duke Ellington's "Sunset and the Mockingbird" and trombonist Mark Miller's "Let," both of which feature Anton Denner on flute, appropriately fluttering on the former and teaming with Miller on the latter to fashion a haunting, medieval-sounding theme to introduce and resolve the soloing efforts.

Valega and his group certainly bring the goods here, more than fulfilling the drummer's hope that "this music will celebrate what we love most about the here and now."

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