

BAKFOUL PROD

**JOWEE OMICIL « NAKED »  
PRESS REVIEW**

# EDITO

For his 3<sup>rd</sup> release as a leader (following *Roots & Grooves* (2009) and *Let's Do This* (2006), the inquisitive, Haiti-descended, Montreal-born, Miami-based woodwind artist Jowee Omicil has chosen to pay homage to his elders and his broad cultural background. In his warm, contemplative way Omicil has produced a disc that reveals new gifts with each listen – stripped bare of pretense and sans frills.

For the most part *Naked* is a program of compact, complete statements delivered in a spontaneous fashion that speaks to a certain freedom principle. “The sense of quietness and consecration that you hear comes from the dedication, intention and the target atmosphere that I wanted to capture,” Omicil suggests, achieving an unusual fellowship with his musicians. Largely bass and percussion execute the musical landscapes Jowee has cultivated for this package of largely original compositions.

The opener, “*Prayer 4 Coltrane*” is the extended moment on this record. Here Jowee achieves an evocative, prayerful reverence, invoking a sensibility of communing with spirits that serves as a powerful in vocation. In preparation for this homage Jowee says “*I prayed with the cats and told them that I wanted them to be totally free; I instructed them briefly on the cadence, their roles and that they should play within a sense of freedom.*”

Coltrane is one of several of Jowee’s primary influences that appear on this record, playing a son’s love (“*Gospel Suite for Dad*”) and including **Ornette Coleman** (“*Ornette Said*”), **Kenny Garrett** (“*Griot Steps*”), “*SONNdaY’s Blues*” (**Sonny Rollins**), and a reworking of **Wayne Shorter**’s classic “*Footprints*.” Characteristic of the distinctive flow of this date the latter is performed on soprano sax with tabla drums, conga, and dual bass accompaniment, lending new textures to Shorter’s modern standard. And clearly these are not empty platitudes, **each tribute bears the sparkle of fresh soundscapes.**

Ornette Coleman, with whom Jowee has developed a friendship, is celebrated in the kind of pithy, folk-melodic mode that Coleman would approve. “*Ornette is a true master for me,*” Omicil affirms, “*and an inspirational human being. He’s been nothing but generous towards me since we’ve known each other. One day we were playing pool in his lab and that melody came to my head.*”

Another rewarding asset is Jowee’s adroit ability to alternate his instruments. In his attractive clarinet work he achieves a deeply expressive, woody tone that shows up on another folk-like melody “*Ti Amo,*” as well as “*Afro PC,*” “*I Need That in My Life,*” and “*Naked Kote Moun Yo.*”

Kenny Garrett’s influence is celebrated with “*Griot Steps,*” with the leader on soprano saxophone, luxuriating in a two-bass atmosphere here – one bassist playing pizzicato the other arco – achieving a fine orchestral balance. This piece and several others are punctuated by spontaneous vocalizations from Jowee, either wordless or as scat embellishments. “*I hear a lot of sounds so I tend to sing them to make sure they come out exactly the way I hear them in my head,*” Jowee explains these oral improvisations. That vocal quality is also borne out in the inclusion of several bits



of studio patter intentionally left on the recording. “*That’s what it’s all about, being naked. The listener gets to hear what took place before or sometimes after the track; it’s intimate, organic.*” That sense of organic intimacy permeates this remarkable disc, right down to the lovely, yearning quality in his alto saxophone in spare duet with Fender-Rhodes on Jowee’s lovely “*Gospel Suite for Dad.*”

The musicians who work with Jowee Omicil on *Naked* may be new to your ears, but perhaps not for long. Of particular note are bassist James Quilan and drummer Michael Piolet, who comprise the core ensemble for most of *Naked*. “They are great young upcoming musicians who I met when I moved to Miami. Michael Piolet is from Chicago and is a great listener; he was 19 when we recorded this. I believe in setting up young musicians for a great future. James Quilan was maybe 18 when we recorded and I just love his attitude. I believe that your personality comes out of your instrument.” **Indeed a keen sense of personality awaits the listener who happens upon this finely crafted, skillfully executed recording.**

by world class US Journalist Willard Jenkins



**LE 19H**

**JOWEE OMICIL : UN JAZZMAN PROMETTEUR**

On stage, improvisation reigns and it gives to the big names in his band



**LE 19H**

**JAZZ : QUAND LA BIGUINE EST LÀ**



# PLAYER



Bakfoul  
Jowee Omicil - Afro PC

3 months

# Jazz



▶ 643 | ♥ 2 | ↻ 1



Bakfoul  
Jowee Omicil - SONNda'YS Blues

3 months

# Jazz



▶ 97 | ♥ 3 | ↻ 1



Bakfoul  
Wole by Jowee Omicil

1 year

# Groove



▶ 326 | ♥ 1



**HIT - JOWEE OMICIL « NAKED »  
(BBjuiss RECORD/ BAKFOUL RECORDS)**

Gilles Delacour



The album begins with a spontaneous collective prayer for John Coltrane, *Prayer 4 Coltrane*. And that's enough to understand the guy blowing the horn is speaking directly to your solar plexus.

Jowee Omicil on saxophone, the name is engraved permanently. Recorded without headsets, in a room with a few microphones, the sound quality also corresponds to the title of this third album, "*Naked*". Without artifice, Omicil composes tributes to Kenny Garrett, *Griots Steps*; to tsunami victims, *Prayer for Japan*; and to Sonny Rollins, Wayne Shorter, Charlie Parker and - Steve Deblond. The last is the head of manager/producer Bakfoul Prod, and of the Festival "*It's not jazz*".

Another story, but one that ties all the others together. Omicil is also a producer, arranger and teacher. Born in Montreal, he is a native of Haiti. In concert – you'll understand. His European career has only just begun.

*IN CONCERT  
YOU'LL UNDERSTAND.  
HIS EUROPEAN CAREER  
HAS ONLY JUST BEGUN.*

Marion Paoli



## JOWEE OMICIL QUARTET

**A high level meeting between big name Creole musicians took place at Bari Jazz Festival in Italy, an event that is organized every June by Koblan Amissah from Ivory Coast.**

Feisty Jowee Omicil - Haitian born, raised in Montreal and living in Miami – was accompanied by Jean-Phi Dary, a well renowned keyboard player from Guyana, by Wody, a bassist from Martinique and by Felix Sabal, a Cameroonian drummer. Jowee Omicil possesses the free jazz afrocentric technique and spirit of the best, like Coltrane or Pharoah Sanders when he plays the saxophone or the clarinet. He no doubt stands out by his invisible connection with Haiti.

You can feel it in his music sometimes colored by the root rhythms of his native island, a spirit associated to certain mystical forces. You just have to see Jowee Omicil in concert to grasp it; his lithe figure gets animated as the music flows and soon, he can't stay still any longer. He runs this way and that among the public, his instrument in mouth, sends notes in all four directions, dances with ecstatic Italians then jumps back on stage with yet more energy, supported by his wonderful band.

Jowee Omicil is a young musician but we could already write a book about the phenomenon.

In the meantime, I'd advice that you quickly get hold of his magic album "Naked" produced by Bakfoul Records.

Christophe Chat Verre



## JAZZ À VIENNE 2014, JOWEE OMICIL CAPTIVATES AUDIENCE AT CYBÈLE

As at the Antique Theater scene much later, the lights also went out at Cybèle scenes on July 12th 2014, some hours ahead though... Cybèle scenes were announcing the end of Vienna Jazz Festival 34th edition to let the quiet of the place regain its rightful state and the inhabitants their routines.

It is commonly admitted that you always leave the best for the end. Cybèle scenes programming did not break the habit. By sheer coincidence or knowing the facts ahead? However, by being the latest of the formations to act on Rezzo Focal scene, Jowee Omicil and his band enhanced by their performance the level generally granted to this scene.

His scraggy silhouette hides so well all the energy and the forceful spirit that he exhibits once on scene to play that you would not credit him for much as a virtuoso... but you should!

That is the way Jowee look out stage, but he is full of kindness when he talks to you... It's 6:30 PM when he appears backstage followed, a few minutes later, by his musicians: Michel Alibo (bass), Felix Sabal-Lecco (drum kit) and Jean-Philippe

Dary (keyboards) and our curiosity is sharpened: who is he to be playing with such big numbers? A lot of us were wondering...

Jowee Omicil show was acclaimed by a standing attendance. And a charming lady expressed the general opinion by saying "Jowee renders jazz contagious. We are contaminated". We also heard Vienne's people say "We rarely saw on the scene of Cybèle, a performance of this level.

This guy and his band are way over the top for Cybèle, they should be programmed at a more prestigious scene, like the Antique Theater"...

Jowee Omicil is doubtless the new expression of this contagious jazz which deceives barriers, and promises a brighter and brighter future.

Jean Jacques Dikongué



## JOWEE OMICIL QUARTET FROM PRINCE TO AL JARREAU AT VITERBO JAZZUP FESTIVAL

It would be a spectacle out of the ordinary was understood immediately. Jowee omicil, like a Pied Piper, climbed on a Chair, in the beginning of the evening, and got to play his sax kidding simultaneously with the public.

Disruptive. Just this simple adjective to describe only minimally the concert Jowee Omicil Quartet gave to Viterbo, an event which certainly will be remembered for a long time for its exceptionality almost embarrassing outcome.

The Canadian-born multi-instrumentalist Jowee Omicil and his formidable band, with a series newly released tracks afro-Haitian-inspired were able to involve people in incredible ways, at the same time, with a disarming ease.

"... *This is the power of music. This is what I want to mention: that people come and dance to jazz again. Jazz was once the popular music, now I want the world to Groove again,*" said Jowee, and it must be said that last night he succeeded perfectly the order.

The sounds that came through on stage had an exceptional character, which star artists rarely have the opportunity to attend this caliber on stage, the quality of involvement in their performance, worthy of a world-class event.

To get an idea of the magnitude of the musicians who performed at the Plaza of Gesù, it suffice to say that, in their

vast repertoire includes collaborations with stars of absolute magnitude ranging from Prince to Al Jarreau.

*AN EVENT WHICH CERTAINLY  
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EMBARRASSING OUTCOME*

Jowee Omicil on alto, soprano saxophones, clarinet, voice Felix Sabal Lecco on drums, voice, Phi Dary on Piano, keyboards and Just Wody on electric bass knew how to engage the audience in a crescendo of emotions and unforgettable moments, that they literally dragged the audience delirious. Eventually all together, artists and guests of JazzUp festival, concluded a memorable concert onstage that confirms, once again, the high level pursued and achieved by JazzUp pointing straight to a clear statement at the top of the national panorama, for production and dissemination of music at a very high level.



## JOWEE OMICIL IS NAKED

Maria Grazia Giove

The third album of multi instrumentalist Jowee Omicil is called “Naked”.

It is a very delicate album where the instruments merge with fragility in an almost acoustic band using variable geometry. Under the silky blanket weaved by the contrabass, the percussions and the Rhodes piano, the Haiti-born Canadian lightly set the sound of his saxophone incompositions - sometimes short - that either call for dance or for meditation.

In a cut dedicated to Ornette Coleman, you can hear the alto telling a story, like words becoming music. Then, it's the clarinet which takes on a theme as light as the epiphany of love. Anyhow, as you listen, you go from a “Griot Steps” majestically disrespectful to a “Footprint” reincarnated in the glinting flight of a soprano becoming a hummingbird. Jowee Omicil delivers an opus where some sepia tinted melodies do not hide the control of the rhythmic placements. The sonority is subtle and rebel at the same time, the subject is often filled with humor.

The man who poses on the cover has been able to give a sensitive soul to the album in its entity. A soul which deepness

is located in a development nearing the most audacious part of live. As the saying goes in the Caribbean : “manké tombé sé bel pa” (The most beautiful steps are the ones which just avoid the fall). The elegance displayed in “Naked” sure means that the path Jowee suggests us to follow is bathed by light...

**Naked** – 2014 – Jowee Omicil. With Jowee Omicil (sax, clarinet, piccolo flute, vocals, Rhodes, didgeridoo), Jeffrey Deen (tabla, halo, hapi), Ti Wes St-Louis (vocals, tanbou, conga), Carlos Alabaci (double bass), James Quilan (double bass), Michael Piolet (drums) & Harold St-Louis (Rhodes)

**Titles :** *Prayer for Coltrane* (for John Coltrane) – *Ornette Said « ... »* (For Ornette) – *Ti Amo* (Italia) – *Griot Steps* (for KG) – *Afro PC* (for Kona) – *SONNda's blues* (for Sonny Rollins) – *Prayer 4 Japan* (for tsunami victims) – *Gospel Suite for Dad (take my Life)* – *My Sheppard is a King* – *Footprint* (for Wayne Shorter) – *I Need That in my Life* – *Panama* (traditional) – *Micky's Groove Reloaded* (for Felipe Tichauer) – *Bach 2 Bird* (for Charlie Parker) – *Naked Kote Moun Yo*

Alain Joséphine



## NAKED, THE LAST OPUS OF JOWEE OMICIL

On “*Naked*”, it’s an ambitious Jowee, sophisticated and rebel who meets us. Bare-chested, the polyvalent instrumentalist poses on the cover of his third album, his saxo soprano in mouth. Canadian of Haitian ascent, he prompts us to a serious listening of a piece of work recommended to libertarian aficionados. After “*Let’s do this*” (2006) and “*Roots and Grooves*” (2009), with “*Naked*” he reveals a more mature self. The opus is elaborated and enriched, themes have a jazz allure from “free” to traditional and rhythmic music, and there are some improvisations in some pieces somehow not always successful despite the timing.

The instrumentalist does not confine himself in a “native perspective” lauded by the “tyrannics” and the “obsoletes” that impound the freedom of the artists. On this album, the used-to-be student from the prestigious Berkeley College of Music (Boston) honors his masters, the tenors that influenced him: Fela Kuti, Manu Dibango, Sonny Rollins, Miles Davis, Luciano Pavarroti, Kenny Garrett, Brandford Marsalis, Ornette Coleman and a whole galaxy of jazzmen.

### A TRIBUTE TO ELDERS

A tribute to Elders Among the fifteen tracks served by a remarkable orchestral ensemble, “Ornette Said” is a praise to Ornette Coleman, father of Free Jazz, the liberation of all that impound creative and innovative freedom. It’s fluid, sweet, melodious, light... There are variations and changes of tone. There are transpositions: Jowee begins in piercing sounds then gets down to graves... The piece is aerial. Some

rhythms are sketched : Haitian or Carribean ? Obviously, one listening will not be enough.

There is an obsessional and respectful side in the saxophonist play that is seducing. Opuses of dedications in memory of jazz ancestors ("Prayer 4 Coltrane" for John Coltrane is the product of a moderate and collective improvisation; "Griot Steps" for Kenny Garrett, "Micky's Groove Reloaded" for Felipe Tichauer); it's also an invite to meditation.

"Sunday's Blues": an attractive impro, cerebral side, interactive and inventive play. We note, by the scrap of an uttered swing, Michael Piolet, a real life drummer, non-mechanical. This music salutes the talent of Sonny Rollins, a great saxophonist tenor. In the course of the album, we discover a Jowee Omicil who shakes the traditional boundaries, who distances himself from the harmonic railings which impose upon him. In other words, he takes all the risks and he assumes them.

"Gospel Suite For Dad" the 8th track, is for his father, Pasteur C. Omicil. It's an outline of Gospel. It is followed by "My Shepard Is a King", a pot-pourri of Protestant topics that come from his childhood.

*ON "NAKED",  
IT'S AN AMBITIOUS JOWEE,  
SOPHISTICATED AND REBEL  
WHO MEETS US*

"Footprint", the 10th piece, is for Wayne Shorter, a U.S saxophonist soprano. An "afro" of Yanvalou rhythm. Jeffrey Deen Tabla, Ti Wes Saint-Louis (conga), Carlos Alabaci (double bass) and James Quilan (double bass) are the talented musicians who played nicely the melody. "Bach 2 Bird" is an homage to Charlie Parker and, intentionally, to Jean-Sebastien Bach, a renowned classical sensation. The piece reveals a gifted saxophonist, very well trained technically and who possesses deep knowledge of jazz.

Aside from paying reverence to those jazz icons who predisposed him musically, Jowee Omicil remains attached to his roots. "Naked" participates in a quest of universalism while revealing an ethnic, traditional stamp which reveals the core of Haitian soul. "Panama" has that perfume of popular music evoking the golden years of tourism in Haiti. It is the same drive of rhythmic generosity that is underlined in "Naked Kote Moun Yo", the second traditional song on the album. With his Picolo Flute which has a very strident sonority, he enhances those pieces, he develops them, he magnifies them without ever deforming them.



Nice arrangements with decent use of tambour. These are not flat renditions of Haitian beat; he adds a touch of modernity: those two songs have the sweet smell of the country.

"Naked": a genius coup, contemplative pieces, jazz feeling, deep rooting to sources... He was born in Montreal of Haitian parents and he begins to play the saxophone at 15, in his father's church. Three years later, he is admitted in the prestigious school of Berklee in Boston where he'll finish major of his class in Music. In the meantime, he adds saxophone soprano, clarinet and flute to his arsenal and plays with high end musicians as Kenny Garrett, Richard Bona, Marcus Miller, Paco Sery and Roy Hargrove. Naked is his third opus. Resonances, a program of Vision 2000 hosted by Jean Wilder Pierresaint and Roland Leonard, did an entire number on the 15 tracks of this new album.

He has already been part of a lot of festivals like "Ce n'est pas du jazz" in France last May.

Rosny Ladouceur



## OPEN JAZZ FEST: JOWEE OMICIL HIGHLIGHT OF THE FESTIVAL

Nino Palencar

Lake in Nove Mesto nad Vahom hosted on Friday and Saturday jazz stars from around the world and appearances of Haitian multi-instrumentalist Jowee Omicil was one of the highlights of the festival.

Open Jazz Fest is the largest jazz festival in Slovakia, which is held in the open air. Tropical summer night and the proximity of water traditionally charming atmosphere of this unique event. On Saturday evening, it reinforced that the new Afro-Haitian Jowee Omicil's view on the current jazz stage. His great communication with the audience pulled people at the feet of the stage his Caribbean rhythms and chants made them dance.

*JOWEE OMICIL WAS ONE  
OF THE HIGHLIGHTS  
OF THE FESTIVAL.*



## FRA BERKELEY E HAITI, ARRIVA JOWEE OMICIL

Maria Grazia Giove

**Il sassofonista ospite oggi di Bari in Jazz  
Scarica tutto il programma degli eventi.**

BARI – Fra Parigi regina di Francia e la suburbana Bobigny – Jowee Omicil piazza a sorpresa una data nel profondo Sud dell'Italia. E finisce a presentare il suo Naked – acclamato ieri e avant'ieri dalla folla cosmopolita riunita al Petit Journal Montparnasse – in un centro commerciale di Bari, sia pure in un luogo enfaticamente chiamato Arena della Pace.

Potenza della musica e dei suoi profeti. Come Gianluca Petrella, che assesta il colpo utile a portare nel «suo» festival il polistrumentista canadese che piace a Barack Obama, anche se deve rinunciare a godere della sua «prospettiva afro-haitian» e del suo «suono soul e spirituale» in una piazzetta della città vecchia o sul sagrato di una chiesa. Come sarebbe stato opportuno (oltre che bello) in questa edizione del decennale di Bari in Jazz, come sempre curata dal centro interculturale Abusuan grazie al sostegno di numerosi spon-

sor privati (da Birra Peroni a Msc Crociere) e a quello variamente declinato da Regione, Provincia, Comune e Puglia Sounds.

### *IL POLISTRUMENTISTA CANADESE CHE PIACE A BARACK OBAMA*

“Occhi e orecchie bene aperti”, dunque, questa sera (ore 21, ingresso libero), alla Mongolfiera di Japigia. Ma non solo qui e ora. E' Mister Kenny Garrett, sassofonista di riferimento per più d'una generazione, che invita a tenere d'occhio questo raffinato collettore di suoni, che mette insieme la tecnica impeccabile dello studente di Berkeley, la pulsazione ritmica (e morbida, nel suo caso) del jazz e l'energia multiforme della world music, fra echi familiari d'origine caraibica che occhieggiano al Sud America e all'afro-beat.



## DISCOVER JOWEE OMICIL, «NAKED»

The multi instrumentalist and composer of Haitian origins Jowee Omicil just released a new album, “*Naked*” in which he pays tribute to his elders and masters of jazz: John Coltrane, Ornette Coleman, Kenny Garrett, Sonny Rollins and Wayne Shorter.

Born in Montreal from Haitian parents and residing in Miami, Jowee Omicil is one of those artists of Caribbean origins with multicultural influences that cross many continents.

The young man is talented. Educated at the renowned Berklee College of Music in Boston, Jowee Omicil is a virtuoso with the clarinet, the saxophone, the flute and the harmonica. He is also a composer, a producer and a professor of music. Those multiple talents gave birth to three

albums as well as numbers of collaborations with artists from around the world, from Cameroon to Cuba and Martinique through Denmark and the United States.

His new album, “*Naked*”, is -as indicated by name- a sober and bare opus which draws from the sources of jazz in an intimate atmosphere filled with spirituality. With his clarinet, his saxophone and his flute, Omicil celebrates those who had an influence on him like John Coltrane, Ornette Coleman, Kenny Garrett and Sonny Rollins.

Jowee Omicil will be in concert on July 12th at “Jazz à Vienne (France)” festival and on August 9th at “Biguine Jazz de Saint-Pierre” festival in Martinique.

Philippe Triay



## OPEN JAZZ FEST HIT AGAIN

After the initial concert stage should include grouping Slovak AMC Trio and their guest with American Mark Whitfield. Jowee Omicil young man originally from Haiti, however, was tougher and the announced band surpassed.

Apparently he's been busy with his own quartet. It was not the only change in the program. The band also announced the cast did not correspond with the real state, where he was originally playing guitar Hervé Samb, but Michel was standing on stage with his alibi pink jazzbasom. The concert will combine some concern to anyone because it was not clear what will be his Merita. But before long, and when you hear the initial tone is all cleared up. If there is a racial difference, both in how blacks feel the rhythm and how to work with him over the tracks.

Every note was in place and the groove he could run regardless of space and time. Its role in this case held a professional drummer originally from Cameroon, Felix Sabal Lecco. Bass tones from the hands of Michel functionally complement rhythmic quartet. He often spoke as a solo player, which showed his technical prowess. J-Phi Dary on keyboards and piano harmonious determine the direct on in which Jowee and its picturesque sound alto saxophone did

not end region. Jowee once initially caught the attention of listeners with its natural and expressive playing with a sense of geniality. During performances running around here and there and constantly interacting forces the audience to enthusiastically welcomed his interest.

### *IN MY VIEW, THE BEST PERFORMANCE OF THE EVENT.*

Sometimes I felt that I watch performances Kenny Gerretta, but it was his younger successor.

The band has been adapted undemanding audience when left amphitheater sound melodic and rhythmic songs to grasp. Occasionally Jowee left boundary own compositions and drift own world.

In my view, the best performance of the event.

Ondrej Kopecky

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