



Circle of Fire (2001)

Liner Notes

Benjy Wertheimer

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About Circle of Fire

From very early in my training in the art of Indian classical percussion, I have dreamed of finding ways of integrating the incredible traditions of India, Indonesia, and Africa with my own melting-pot American musical roots. During my years with Ancient Future, I found a wonderful avenue for developing world fusion music with some amazing musicians. Yet I still felt as if I was missing some connections with the threads of rock, funk, and Nigerian music that were such an important part of my early life.

Circle of Fire is the next step in my realization of this dream, seeking to integrate the electronic with the acoustic, the contemporary with the historic, and the North American with the global. I am a product of the United States, and it was in looking outward from my culture that I visualized Circle of Fire. Circle of Fire is intended first and foremost to be FUN - to inspire the dancer inside each of us and invite us deeper into our bodies. It is also a prayer that all of us in the United States will take the time to explore other cultures, other world-views, and other perspectives that place the truly important aspects of life ahead of the shallow materialism that is the tragic hallmark of contemporary Western life.

There is no way I could have realized this vision without the help, support, and creative input of some enormously gifted musical friends. In particular, I'd like to thankfully acknowledge Jeff Leonard, Tim Ellis, Jim Walker, Randy Mead, and Heather Wertheimer. I owe a deep debt of gratitude to Babatunde Olatunji for opening my early childhood eyes and ears to the depth and power of the drum. I am forever grateful to my musical gurus Ali Akbar Khan and Zakir Hussain for their patience with me, showing me what is possible in music and providing me with an unending source of inspiration by example.

Tracks

1. Eclipse
2. Circle of Fire
3. Outback
4. Wings of a Thousand Moths
5. Tahitian Wave
6. Rush Hour in Dakar
7. Seven in Senegal
8. Back in Dakar
9. Realm of Neptune
10. Under the Spell

Credits

Benjy Wertheimer: tabla, congas, djembe, dumbek, talking drum, frame drum, shakers and assorted percussion, keyboards, esraj, guitar, vocals, drum programming, loops and samples

Tim Ellis: Electric and acoustic guitar, electric sitar, Turkish cumbus, e-bow guitar

Heather Wertheimer: vocals and production assistance

Jeff Leonard: bass

Randy Mead: flute, bass flute, bansuri, soprano and alto sax

Jim Walker: vocals

Conceived composed, produced, engineered, and mixed at Wolf Cub Studios (Portland, OR) by Benjy Wertheimer (with tremendous assistance from Heather!)

"Wings of a Thousand Moths" inspired by Rumi's poem "The Question"

Mastered by Ryan Foster at Freq Mastering, Portland, OR

Drumming photos by Joni Miller, Laughing Willow Design, Vancouver, BC

Graphic Design and Production: Musicraft Multi-Media, Woodburn, OR