

Medeski, Martin & Wood with J.Scofield - Out Louder (2006)

Written by bluesever

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- 01 - *Little Walter Rides Again*
- 02 - *Miles Behind*
- 03 - *In Case The World Changes Its Mind*
- 04 - *Tequila And Chocolate*
- 05 - *Tootie Ma Is A Big Fine Thing*
- 06 - *Cachaca*
- 07 - *Hanuman*
- 08 - *Telegraph*
- 09 - *What Now*
- 10 - *Julia*
- 11 - *Down The Tube*
- 12 - *Legalize It*

Billy Martin - Composer, Drums, Percussion John Medeski - Composer, Keyboards John Scofield - Composer, Guitar Chris Wood - Bass

Out Louder reunites keyboardist John Medeski, drummer Billy Martin, and bassist Chris Wood with guitar great John Scofield, who employed the trio on his 1997 *A Go Go* album. That record opened the creativity gates for both the trio and Scofield, who fed off and goaded each other into territories neither party had previously gone separately. *Out Louder* isn't so much a rematch as an upgrade. Both Scofield and MMW have continued to explore in the near-decade since *A Go Go*, and they come to this project with a greater understanding of their collective abilities as well as a willingness to explore the possibilities further. Not unexpectedly, the four musicians work hard here, but they also have a ton of fun. The opening track, "Little Walter Rides Again," serves notice that this isn't going to be an exercise in showing off but rather four envelope-pushing musicians picking each other's brains and seeing what they find. An easygoing blues vamp with a funky, Memphis-style beat, the track keeps the quartet reined in while simultaneously allowing each musician to dance around a bit within its structure. That idea of holding back doesn't last long, however, as that leadoff gives way to "Miles Behind," a nod to electric Miles Davis minus the trumpet. Although the players, particularly Medeski and Scofield,

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take several opportunities to reach for the outside fringes, Out Louder never becomes inaccessible, even during its freer-jazz moments. "Tequila and Chocolate," for example, takes up with a simple bossa nova rhythm that eventually goes wildly astray without losing touch with its form, and the John Lennon tune "Julia" (which, honestly, borrows only minimally from the original melody) is a soft, sweet, and sensual ballad that never strays even close to the edge yet still manages to feel edgy. That's not to say that those looking for the heavy jams will be disappointed. "What Now" finds Medeski and Scofield challenging each other as if they were Keith Emerson and Jimi Hendrix having it out at some late-night club, and "Down the Tube," though essentially a simple funky blues, flirts with psychedelia, Scofield turning in some of his most startling playing of the set. The session ends with a virtually unrecognizable improv on Peter Tosh's reggae anthem "Legalize It" that spotlights Martin and Wood in lockstep groove. If ever MMW and Scofield decided to make something more permanent of their meet-ups, one can only guess where else they might go. ---Jeff Tamarkin, Rovi

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