



## THE NELS CLINE SINGERS *MACROSCOPE*

Taking in the full breadth of guitarist **Nels Cline**'s sonic sphere of influence has always required a particularly wide lens. Zoom out from his fret board-blistering mash-ups of abrasive rock and bleeding-edge jazz to encompass his decade-long role with inventive rock superstars Wilco, then pull back further to find space for his ventures into Brazilian rhythms, electronic drones, and all manner of madcap musical fusion.

***MACROSCOPE***, the fifth album and Mack Avenue debut by his adventurous trio **The Nels Cline Singers**, provides a measure of the long-running group's staggering range. Captivating and continually surprising, the album finds the instrumental trio with the slyly deceptive name veering in one off-kilter direction only to suddenly be overwhelmed by another drastic stylistic shift, often within the space of a single tune. Serrated psychedelia becomes consumed by soulful Brasiliana, blissed-out electronica overwhelmed by garage-rock skronk. Then there's the wholly unexpected "Red Before Orange," where a howling Hendrix-inspired solo suddenly erupts in the middle of a slick lounge-jazz number, Cline unleashing the inner George Benson that few of us expected he even had.

"The title ***MACROSCOPE*** speaks to the idea of the mutt within," Cline says, "the fact that I'm not in *any* one genre, and never have been. I was a rock and roll kid, but after hearing Coltrane and Miles and Weather Report, then Indian music and Nigerian pop and that sort of thing, there was no turning back. From that point on, the idea of purism just was not possible."

With the Singers, Cline has assembled a vehicle that he can steer in any and all of these deviating directions. On ***MACROSCOPE***, Cline and founding drummer Scott Amendola are joined by bassist Trevor Dunn, replacing former bassist Devin Hoff. "I think Trevor is the only guy who could have followed Devin into the band," Cline says. "They both share a multiple personality aesthetic. Trevor not only is a great jazz player, but he has no fear of pop, no fear of black metal, no fear of rocking out. On his first gig with us, he destroyed like he'd been playing in the band for years. I found that absolutely remarkable, and I don't think there are many people who could have fit in as seamlessly."

The trio also expands its already substantial palette with the addition of several special guests: keyboardist Yuka C. Honda, co-founder of the eccentric Japanese pop band Cibo Matto; percussionists Cyro Baptista and Josh Jones; and harpist Zeena Parkins. Cline also removes tongue from cheek to actually add his voice to the mix on two tracks, slightly undermining the irony of the band's name while drawing inspiration from Brazilian singer-songwriters on "Respira" and "Macroscopic."

"I was emboldened to use my voice from decades of listening to Baden Powell, who's not a great singer but has an amazing voice," Cline says. "I think that's true of a lot of Brazilian singer-songwriters, where virtuosic singing is not the point. What we're listening to is personality and composition and feeling and flavor."

"Macroscopic" was penned in tribute to Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama. The variation on the title of the album reflects the artist's similarly expansive worldview, which in Kusama's case stems from an experience early in life that could be termed a breakdown or an epiphany. "I think she sees the world in its atomic, microscopic make-up," Cline says. "She became overwhelmed by that and it informs her work, where the macrocosm and the microcosm really are one."

The album begins with two tracks featuring the trio alone—the inviting “Companion Piece” and the brisk, acute-angled “Canales’ Cabeza,” a tribute to Bay Area chef and music aficionado Paul Canales. “The Wedding Band” begins with a warped, percussive clatter before settling into a sunny country-western lope. The dense, hypnotic “Climb Down” stems from a jam with Parkins in which it becomes impossible to tell one instrumentalist’s distorted inventions from another’s.

Cline cites such diverse influences as Weather Report’s Joe Zawinul and Czech bassist Miroslav Vitous as inspirations for the epic “Seven Zed Heaven,” where a whorl of ‘70s-style fusion evanesces into an immersive, ecstatic drone. The album draws to a ferocious close with the anarchic “Hairy Mother” and the playfully skewed “Sascha’s Book of Frogs,” named for Amendola’s son and an actual amphibian-centric tome.

In addition to the CD and download versions of **MACROSCOPE**, Mack Avenue will also release a vinyl version of the album in a different sequence and minus the tracks “Canales’ Cabeza,” “Hairy Mother” and “Sascha’s Book of Frogs.”

Throughout the album, Cline says, the intention is to “arrive at a place that could be surprising or unexpected or maybe inevitable, but that is so compelling or all-consuming that we’re absorbed and can forget about all kinds of minutiae. I would like us to arrive at a point that has no boundaries, that’s totally amorphous. It’s like sunshine or mist, it’s everywhere and nowhere.”

One of the most inventive and original guitarists across a wide range of genres, Nels Cline has worked with members of Sonic Youth and Deerhoof as well as artists including Tim Berne, Charlie Haden, Julius Hemphill, Carla Bozulich, Mike Watt and The Geraldine Fibbers, and is the lead guitarist of Wilco. Cline has recently recorded an album of duets with guitarist Julian Lage and has been touring in a free-improv meeting with Medeski Martin & Wood.

**The Nels Cline Singers • MACROSCOPE**  
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For more information on **The Nels Cline Singers**, please visit [nelscline.com](http://nelscline.com)

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