



OFF THE TRACKS

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Blicher Hemmer Gadd: Omara



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C-Nut Records

Blicher Hemmer Gadd – or “BMG” – is saxophonist Michael Blicher, Hammond organ player Dan Hemmer and master jazz and pop-rock session drummer Steve Gadd. They **released a self-titled group album back in 2014** and then took the songs from it – and a few others – out on the road

across 2016/17.

Recorded in 2016 but released this year **Omara** is the live album in support of that tour. It's a laidback, funky café-jazz thing; Gaddisms abound, triplet hi-hat/bass/snare fills, samba-with-brushes, groove-based solos but it's not at all just Gadd's show. He's often just cruising behind the other two (If I Were A Cow) as Blicher's sax takes the lead with Hemmer's creamy keys filling out both rhythmic and melodic duties.

It's warm, relaxed, inviting. The opening, title tune has Gadd laying down some classy brush work for the poke and prod of the Hammond's keys and Blicher taking his soprano sax for a stroll.

From there we walk through the Charlie Hunter-like stop-start funk of Elijah Rock, replete with Gadd taking his time to get to know the toms on a melodic, groove-injected solo.

There's Cissy-Strut pieces (They Had No Roses) one minute, and deep balladry (The Colour Red) the next.

If you came to this for Gadd (as I did) you'll likely leave a fan of the entire trio. Yes, Gadd's the old head here, the seasoned pro, but his bandmates have ideas-aplenty and taste-galore and quite the magic touch. Three Grains of Salt has Gadd doing a peacock-strutting march beneath Blicher's proud sax line, My Babe has Hemmer out in front on the Hammond, Gadd's brushes grooving beneath.

The upbeat Meters-esque Korean BBQ is the take-us-home track. By which time you'll be hitting repeat and running through this again and again. A classy project with just the right amount of “live concert album” feel to elevate it beyond the band's assured debut.

