

PRESS RELEASE



(photo by Ed Marshall Photography)

Turning Jewels into Water:: *The Intersection of Ritual, Improvisation and Global Rhythms*

Turning Jewels Into Water is a live electronic duo led by Indian-born drummer/producer Ravish Momin along with Haitian electronic percussionist Val Jeanty. Hailing from a background in improvisation, the duo merge the folkloric rhythms and ancient chants of their respective cultures with digital synths and ambient sounds using a blend of electronic drums and controllers to create a ritual-based dance music of the future.

Turning Jewels Into Water

When Momin was an artist-in-residence at Pioneer Works in Brooklyn NY in 2017, he'd invited Val Jeanty for an informal jam session, which led to the formation of Turning Jewels Into Water. The name of the project alludes to one of the impacts of climate-change where water itself will become an extremely precious resource in the near future. Their collaboration, rooted in improvisation, evokes the esoteric realms of the creative subconscious. Drawing from the voodoo religion, Val recreates the ancient rhythms and pulse of Haiti through digital beats, while Momin, rooted in Indian folk and Black Music traditions, is also influenced by street music from Sao Paulo to Durban. Drawing on the AACM motto of "ancient to the future," they employ cutting-edge music-technological tools such as Ableton, acoustic drums outfitted with Sensory Percussion triggers, Force Sensing Resistor (FSR) drum

pads and Smart Fabric MIDI Controllers, to create music with spiritual resonance.

They have released a critically-acclaimed full-length album on the Chicago-based FPE Records, entitled *A Map of Absences*. Their music was described by Bandcamp as *'a sound that feels deeply rooted in tradition, but adapted for a generation of people who care as much about their roots as they do innovation.'*

They have toured Europe and the US, and most notably have performed at the Earshot Festival (Seattle, WA, US) Bang On A Can Marathon (New York City, NY, US), ZEZ Festival (Croatia) and Tarcento Jazz Festival (Italy.)

In 2020, Momin was awarded a prestigious grant from NewMusic USA for Turning Jewels into Water to collaborate with video artist Art Jones and dancers Rosalynd Harris and Infinite Lynn, to create an interdisciplinary work that depicted the transformation of an individual facing the impacts of climate change.



Val Jeanty

Haitian electronic music composer/percussionist/turntablist **Val Jeanty** evokes the musical esoteric realms of the creative subconscious self-defined as "Afro-Electronica." She incorporates her African Haitian musical traditions into the present and beyond, combining acoustics with electronics and the archaic with the post-modern. She works with a diverse array of artists, including Geri Allen, Anthony Braxton and Harriet Tubman Double trio. She is the recipient of the Van Lier Grant, Meet the Composer Grant, and her project "ON" was supported in part by the New York State Music Fund. Her "Afro-Electronica" installations have been showcased in New York City at the Whitney Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, and the Village Vanguard, and internationally at SaalFelden Music Festival in Austria, Stanser Musiktage in Switzerland, Jazz à la Villette in France, and the Biennale Di Venezia Museum in Italy.

Ravish Momin

Indian-born drummer/electronic music producer Ravish Momin (also known as Sunken Cages), studied with US Jazz master-drummer **Andrew Cyrille**. He has worked as a sideman with a wide array of musicians including US Jazz legend **Kalaparush Maurice McIntyre** (AACM/Chicago) and pop-star **Shakira**. In the past, he led Tarana, a shapeshifting global-Jazz trio, on international and domestic stages for the past 14 years

His current projects include '**Turning Jewels Into Water**' (with Haitian electronic music pioneer **Val Jeanty**), a duo with **dragonchild** (Ethio-American saxophonist DA Mekonnen of Debo Band) and **Zelzeleh** (a Digital Sufi Ensemble)

He has recently produced tracks with South African Gqom group **Phelimuncasi** (Nyege Nyege Records), Saxophonist **Maria Valencia** (Meridian Brothers), along with producers **Makossiri** (Hakuna Kulala, Kenya), **Saskia** (QTV, Brazil), **Kush Arora** (Discrepant, US), **Baba Sy** (Jokkoo Collective, Spain/Senegal) and **Rani Jambak** (Indonesia, Yes No Wave)

He has done remixes for **Depeche Mode**, global electronic music producers **Batida** (Portugal), **Babani Sound System** (Mauritius), and **Guedra Guedra** (Morocco). His recent performance highlights include the **Free Forma Impulse Festival** (Italy), **AfroBanana Festival** (Cyprus), **Words/Beat/ Life Festival** (Kennedy Center's Millennium Stage (US)), **Big Ears Festival** (US), **LeGuessWho? Festival** (NL), **Positive Futures Festival** (AT), **Lincoln Center Outdoors Festival** (NYC, US), **Slingshot Festival** (US) and **Festival Congedi** (IT).

He is also the recipient of grants from New Music USA, The Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation, NYC Arts In Education Roundtable, Arts International, Meet The Composer and NYSCA (New York State Council of the Arts)

Video

▶ [Turning Jewels Into Water - Dark waters rushing in](#)

▶ [Turning Jewels Into Water -For Composing For Percussion 2021](#)

Press Highlights

[**Mixmag**](#) (*6 Artists to Watch for May 2019*)

"The bass continuum is mutating again and the result is Turning Jewels Into Water, a collab between Indian-born Jazz drummer and producer Ravish Momin and Haitian percussionist and turntablist Val Jeanty. Their debut album, "A Map of Absences" hops through Jazz, rhythmic syncopations and dubby rumble. It's as hypnotic as you might hope and comes with killer remixes by Slikback and PlayPlay. Subwoofer recommended."

[**RedBull Radio**](#)

"Exemplifying the improvisational nature from whence they came, the duo merge the ritual rhythms and ancient melodies of their respective cultures in a swirl of live loops and synths, creating a multi-national dance music of the future."

[**BandCamp**](#) (Album of The Day) and [**Best of Winter 2019**](#)

"On Map of Absences, Turning Jewels Into Water perfectly marries the cultural background of its two members—percussionist Val Jeanty is of Haitian descent, while drummer/producer Ravish Momin is Indian—to the aqueous sound of electronic music. The result is a sound that feels deeply rooted in tradition, but adapted for a generation of people who care as much about their roots as they do innovation".

[**PopMatters**](#)

"Map of Absences is an ambitious work and one that reveals the grand vision of Turning Jewels Into Water. Still, the duo is capable of also binding these impenetrable structures with slightly lighter motifs. The push towards rave-like motifs is very nicely adapted to that effect, while at other times a post-club rendition prevails. It is a nice cherry on top for an already impressive work." Spyros Stasis

[**Afropunk**](#)

"TJIW's tracks are also streaming with rhythmic ideas, mirroring a wide variety of local, next-generation beats-makers all over the world: Chicago footwork, Durban's Gqom, Lisbon and Luanda's post-kuduro and -kizomba fusions, and BK's own flex productions — all find a space in the duo's

hard-drive, with Jeanty's scratches and Momin's drones adding layers to the organized chaos." Piotr Orlov

All Music

The duo keep their ear to global dance music innovations, dedicating one track to Lisbon-based visionary Nidia and handing others over to producers such as Kenya's Slikback and Mexico City's Nueve Vidas. While informed by styles like footwork and kuduro, TJIW never try to directly emulate them, instead forging their own cross-cultural path which envisions a more positive, unified world." Paul Simpson

National Sawdust

"Somehow, this skeletal, spirit-filled music is danceable, too; the video for "Dark Waters Rushing In" makes that much clear. Me, I was perfectly content to dance inside my head, soaking up this futuristic cyberpunk ritual music fashioned by heads, hands, and hearts well versed in ancient traditions, and devoted to its global migration and mutation. Brainy and seductive, this music honors tradition, while emphasizing transition and transmission." Steve Smith (National Sawdust, New Yorker)