

Ayahuasca

Welcome to the Work

Ben Lee

TEN FINGERS RECORDS

THE TRANSFORMATIVE properties of the Amazonian healing medicine *ayahuasca* are unmistakable on Australian singer-songwriter Ben Lee's ninth album. Lee has returned from his shamanic journeys with an intimate, acoustic-based sound that leans closer to folk rock than to the bouncy indie pop for which he's known.

Ayahuasca chronicles the epiphanies and tribulations of "the work": converting one's inner darkness to light after consuming the psychoactive concoction. "Welcome to the House of Mystical Death" conveys the discomfort and panic that can beset the ayahuasca voyager before the instrumental cacophony gives way to harmony. The golden vocal harmonies on songs like "I Am That I Am" declare the glory of spiritual breakthrough.

Shadow and light find reconciliation in the album's closing cut, "Thank You." Lee and the album's cocreator, actress-musician Jessica Chapnik Kahn (under the

stage name Appleonia), send out an inspired prayer of gratitude for the whole of creation, from "the diamonds and the demons" to "the plastic and the gold." Lee has affirmed that gratitude by committing 100 percent of the album royalties to the Amazon Conservation Team and the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies.

Lee, who has recently reached mainstream audiences via the TV show *The Voice* and the web series *Deep Talk in the Shallow End: Pop Culture from a Consciousness Perspective*, has chosen to embed wildflower seeds in *Ayahuasca*'s plantable packaging. It's a fitting gesture from an alchemist working to turn plastic into gold, cardboard into flora, pop music into prayer. —DAMON ORION



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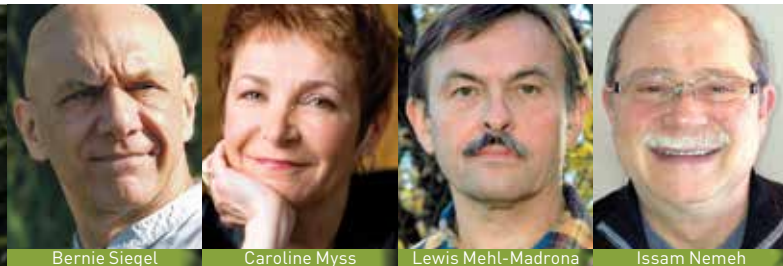
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