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# Forked Tongue

## Revolutionary Snake Ensemble | Cuneiform Records (2008)

By [Mark Corroto](#)

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Feel good. It's okay to feel good in these days of war, floods, pestilence, and (insert the current price of) gasoline. Certainly the tradition of jazz, especially New Orleans jazz, tells us to celebrate the moment, even if that moment is minutes after you've buried a love one. For that you must have a brass band and the troop known as the Revolutionary Snake Ensemble is certainly a worthy one.



Founded in Boston by saxophonist Ken Field in 1990, the RSE takes the concept of N.O. brass and expands it into the worlds of Sun Ra, James Brown, George Clinton, and Billy Idol(?). Sure, why not? Field, a member of the Birdsongs of the Mesozoic, the avant-post-punk-art-rock band, is equally comfortable in classical, jazz, and alternative music. This band is commonly dressed as a cross between Funkadelic and Ra's Arkestra, but don't let their costumes distract you from the music. The brass band sound and the fantastic improvising are the icing on this cake. Fans of Steven Bernstein's Sexmob, the Lounge Lizards, and New Basics Brass Band should listen to this music.

Just as he did on the first RSE disc *Year Of The Snake* (Innova, 2003), Field sprinkles traditional music with popular culture. Alongside a faithful rendition of "Just A Closer Walk," "Give Me Jesus," and "Down By The Riverside" the band delivers Billy Idol's "White Wedding." You would never know MTV was in the house, but this percussion-laden take brings a smile to the lips every time. The ensemble shines here, not only in its choice of music but the energy which it evokes. Likewise, "Que Sera Sera" from the Hitchcock film *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956) is a devilish take on Doris Day with more shuffle than saffron. The highlight of this disc just might be funky rendition of Ornette Coleman's "Chippie," where the band dresses this classic track in an all

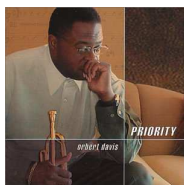
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together new high. Their intertwined horns weave notes around a gumbo of bluesy funk. Certainly a good time had by all.

Visit [Revolutionary Snake Ensemble](#) on the web.  
[Revolutionary Snake Ensemble at All About Jazz.](#)

Track listing: Just A Closer Walk; Slots; Little Lisa Jane; The Large S; Chippie; Give Me Jesus; Down By The Riverside; Que Sera Sera; White Wedding; Minor Vee.

Personnel: Ken Field: alto saxophone, whistles, percussion, clapping; Jon Fraser: trumpet; Andrew Hickman: tenor saxophone; Kimon Kirk: acoustic bass; Phil Neighbors: drums, percussion, electric bass; Eric Paull: drums, percussion; Gabrielle Agachiko: vocals; Karen Aqua: djembe, tambourine, clapping; Andy Pinkham: electric bass, clapping; Lennie Peterson: trombone; Jesse Williams: bass.

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