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The Avalanches “Reflecting Light” [ft. Sananda Maitreya & Vashti Bunyan]

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By Will Miller

Though [the Avalanches](#) went on an almost two-decade hiatus after releasing their [debut](#), the group managed to maintain its frenetic energy on their acclaimed follow-up, [Wildflower](#). Only now does it seem that the band’s vibrancy is beginning to dissipate. With the four singles [released](#) in the lead-up to their third record, they’ve settled into a steady, predictable pattern: eye-catching, “fill-in-the-blank” features paired with their most conventional work yet. It’s not as if they’ve totally lost direction—beneath the homogeneity of their newfound placidity, there are still murmurs of greater passion.

“Reflecting Light” epitomizes the Avalanches’ current era. This low-key, luxuriating piece of synth pop features surprise guests: soul singer **Sananda Maitreya** and folk elder [Vashti Bunyan](#). Bunyan appears only as a sample from her 1970 track “Glow Worms”; the group splices together her original verses to create the refrain, “Dreamers moving slowly through reflected light.” This collage buoys the track, an otherwise ordinary wash of spacey, sparkling keys not quite dynamic enough to allow Maitreya’s capable vocals to truly stretch. Still, there’s something miraculous in how the Avalanches

gradually intertwine Bunyan’s 50-year-old melodies into Maitreya’s melismas, culminating in a final minute of past/present unity that reminds you of how exhilarating their music can be when they pursue their ambitions. ■

