



GHOSTLY INTERNATIONAL

GI-310

Starchild & The New Romantic *Language*

TRACKLIST

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| 01. Language | 08. Some People I Know |
| 02. Mood | 09. Can I Come Over? |
| 03. Only If U Knew | 10. Doubts |
| 04. Hands Off | 11. Good Stuff |
| 05. Hangin On | 12. Boys Choir |
| 06. Black Diamond | 13. Lost Boys |
| 07. Ophelia's Room | 14. Hand To God |

RELEASE BIO

"Black boys have a whole world of complexity that society makes us stomp out of ourselves." *Language*, Bryndon Cook's full-length debut as Starchild & The New Romantic, communicates his refusal to do so. Describing himself early-on as a "young romantic boy from Maryland," Cook has long been a dreamer, a student of black music's rich lineage and its intersection with pop. He's drawn to landmark moments where artists have found truth in darkness; the diverse language of music living in their core. This record is his; lifting off from the monochrome world of *Crucial*, his 2016 EP on Ghostly International, up towards a dazzling crimson blood-rush of sky-high defiance and autonomy. On *Language*, Cook refines his phonics for funk, electro, and R&B, and arrives at a revelation, best summarized by a single motto: "my sensitivity is my strength."

"When I wrote these songs, the sunshine of my mind was beginning to set in a dark place. I found myself developing almost a surrogate relationship with my telephone. I would fall asleep at night clutching it, waiting for a call. When we parted, I would become attached to my phone as a conduit to this person I had lost."

Even if the valleys of their relationship were debilitating — a "black goth realm" to his soul, as Cook puts it — he often overlooks them in hopes of more peaks, more light, resulting in his most earnest, warm-hearted material to date. Take the tender single, "Hangin On." Cook beams above a prismatic soul-tinged shuffle and luminescent keys, still visited by the past yet at peace with the present.

The pitch is far more pointed on the album's title track, a vibrant, funk-fueled opener that wastes little time making its purpose heard. "Should have stuck with me kid," Cook begins, as nasty as he is rapturous. By its end, he's in full control. "Can I get a witness?" He screams, invoking the power of an affirmation ushered from church aisles into the lexicon by Kirk Franklin.

Sonically and spiritually, Cook finds guidance in grand standards: looking up to producers Jimmy Jam & Terry Lewis, studying their contributions to the New Jack Swing era and pop music at large. Touchstone statements like Janet Jackson's *Control*, Michael Jackson's *Bad*, and Prince's *1999*; singular breakout LPs from Terence Trent D'Arby and Bobby Brown; the honesty of Bruce Springsteen's *Nabraska* and Carole King's *Tapestry*; the ingenuity of Laurie Anderson. Cook also reflects on recent years with Solange, as part of her touring band, and collaborations with Dev Hynes aka Blood Orange, as reminders of artistic individuality. "Being around them now urges me to find my own way of delivering my own messages."

Cook expands his message and its impact by arranging talents. For the first time, sessions included members of his band, The New Romantic, allowing for keyboard/synth parts to be recorded straight-through, with no punch-ins, and a more dynamic atmosphere overall. Further, Cook recruits The Newark Boys Chorus to underscore the most poignant lines of "Boys Choir," giving them the entire stage for the coda: "Be it understood. / This love is mine."

Moves like this get to the root of the record: a contemplation of the boyhood that never truly leaves us. "In the black community, any sign of femininity or childlike wonder is often misconstrued as weakness, because society has always expected us to be strong. They prey on us as kids and take us to prison like adults. They kill us on the street. They take everything from us and never say thank you."

Language is the sound of Bryndon Cook eloquently occupying his space without apology, envisioning a world where the crimson qualities of sensitivity and softness aren't shamed, they are celebrated as magic.



RELEASE INFO

Catalogue Number: GI-310

Format: CD, LP

Release Date: February 23th, 2018

UPC: LP- 804297831015 LPC1- 804297831008

CD- 804297831022

Genre: Alternative

Not available for export

Box Lot: LP-10 CD-35

Territory restrictions: none

Vinyl is not returnable

POINTS OF INTEREST

- Debut full length following his 2016 EP, *Crucial*.
- Media coverage at New York Times, Rolling Stone, i-D, Pitchfork, Interview Magazine, The FADER
- Touring member of Solange, Blood Orange, Kindness
- In 2017 Starchild collaborated with: Dev Hynes on the VeilHymn project
- Guests on Porches' forthcoming 2018 album, The House
- Standard weight vinyl is housed in matte jacket with inner sleeve

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LP UPC

LPC1 UPC

CD UPC



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