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Keller Williams
Dream
(Sci Fidelity)
Essential: "Rainy Day"



It was Keller Williams's dream to make a record he could still be proud of at 80 years old. But his latest album isn't just a dream for him: It's a dream for fans of jam-band rock, too. "Dream," Williams's 11th album, is a quirky, genre-spanning jam session with contributions from 20 guest musicians. With a little help from his friends -- including virtuoso banjoist Bela Fleck, Grateful Dead rocker Bob Weir, jazz guitarist Charlie Hunter, and tabla player Samir Chatterjee -- Williams meets his match as his signature guitar looping evolves and thrives on the flourishes of jazz, country, and world music. Traces of reggae and hip-hop enliven "Ninja Love," featuring Michael Franti's deep, smoky vocals. On "Rainy Day," Martin Sexton's playful trumpet-like vocals and beat boxing blend with sporadic guitar snippets, pushing jam rock outside the confines of 15-minute guitar solos. It's about time someone embraced the genre with such creativity. [Amy Farnsworth]