**Dana And Alden - *Speedo***

All their lives, Dana and Alden McWayne knew they wanted to be in a band together. After cutting their teeth at jazz jams around their hometown of Eugene, Oregon, the two formed a duo simply bearing their first names and cut an EP titled *Brothers* in 2021. Over 2023’s *Quiet Music For Young People* and 2024’s *Coyote, You’re My Star*, Dana and Alden quickly established an eclectic, genre-agnostic sound drawn from their omnivorous musical upbringing — built on Dana’s saxophone and Alden’s drums, rooted in jazz, but pulling strains from indie, pop, rap, funk, pretty much everything. They soon caught the ears of Concord Jazz and began prepping *Speedo*, their latest and most fully-realized collection yet.

*Speedo* is the culmination of whirlwind years, the duo’s ascent fueled in equal parts by grassroots word-of-mouth from touring and online fervor from some unlikely TikTok success. Back when *Quiet Music* dropped, Dana and Alden were as surprised as anyone else to watch “Let’s Go To Trader Joe’s” and “Dragonfly” go viral. Even in the more Wild West corners of TikTok, Dana and Alden’s idiosyncratic sound stood out amidst all the major label pop — as if they were unintentionally Trojan Horsing weirdo psychedelic jazz into mainstream consciousness. “There were a bunch of soccer videos from Mexico with ‘Dragonfly,’” Alden recalls, discussing how surreal it was to see people from around the world, in wildly different demographics, connecting with their song. “I think we’re making left-field music but embracing the power of the internet.”

“People don’t give young audiences enough credit,” Dana quickly adds. “We all grew up listening to sample-based music, which gives people big ears. I also think people are tired from two decades of really polished, quantized, compressed, shiny music, and are down for something that’s really human and a little messy.”

Dana and Alden’s eclecticism partially comes from growing up with the streaming era at their fingertips, sure, but also from an exploratory upbringing in the free-form counter-culture environment of Eugene. They raided the public library for Bob Dylan and Talking Heads CDs, while Grateful Dead tribute bands jammed at the farmer’s market. Their dad’s love of jazz trickled down and got them involved in the local scene, where elder players took them under their wing; family gatherings with their mom’s side featured a bunch of Irish relatives playing trad folk. “There’s this energy that you can be whoever you want to be in Eugene,” Alden explains.

“Whatever we end up doing, it ends up being a bit different and weird,” Dana continues.

Soon, the brothers ventured further afield — Dana ended up working on a farm in Durham, while Alden attended music school in Boston. When Alden put together a band for a show in New York, he had to track his older brother down. (“It was like finding someone in the jungles of Nicaragua,” he quips.) From there, the project grew more serious, jumping on tours with Benny Sings and Remi Wolf and embarking on a headlining tour in fall 2024. By now, Dana and Alden had both relocated to New York, and a backing band had cohered: Andrew Mitchell on bass, Ebba Dankel on vocals and keys, Eli Torgersen on vocals and guitar, and Salim Charvet on sax and synths. After cutting *Coyote, You’re My Star* with the full group, it was time for another leap into the unknown. For *Speedo*, the McWaynes decamped to Lisbon, holing up with producer Charif Megarbane to push the edges of their sound once more.

After hitting it off in a few chance meetings, the McWaynes and Megarbane had planned a laidback visit in January 2025. The plan: jam a bit in Megarbane’s living room, walk Lisbon, drink too much espresso. But the personal and musical connection proved so potent that in a matter of days, the trio had completed nearly 20 songs. *Speedo* came into focus spontaneously and rapidly.

The brothers had slightly different takes on Lisbon. It was a rainy week, and Dana and Alden were recording in basements without heat. “That’s the energy of the album to me,” Alden says. “Damp, eating steak every day, over-caffeinated. It wasn’t romantic summer Lisbon.”

To Dana, Lisbon represented a sort of time travel. Their engineer Rui’s basement had no clocks and their phones didn’t work. It was loaded with analogue synths Rui had fixed up on his own, and they ran Dana’s sax through a homemade plate reverb. “It felt like a time capsule of the ‘60s or ‘70s,” he says. “We made what we could with the tools we had, and I feel like the music ended up being a reflection of that.”

Though “retro” would never be the aim with Dana and Alden, Dana had indeed been diving deep into ‘60s and ‘70s sounds. He and Megarbane geeked out on Italian film composers; Alden and Megarbane geeked out on new wave. From jams originating with just sax, drums, and Megarbane on guitar, *Speedo* was a fast, adventurous process. The brothers call Megarbane a “Swiss Army knife” of a musician, and point to the indie stylings, Middle Eastern funk, and languid synth textures across the album. Megarbane’s only rule was working with urgency and without preciousness, never stopping to question decisions or overly fine-tune the tracks. “He says he ‘works dangerously,’” Alden laughs.

Across *Speedo*, Dana and Alden’s already-expansive palette continues to mutate. “Lisbon In Rain” introduces things early on, capturing the ambling, introspective mood of their trip, Dana’s sax and Megarbane’s guitar each rippling around the track like a walk through the city with no particular destination. “Melange” is fried psychedelia after the sun comes back out; “Don’t Run Away” is a wistful synth-indie track about closing ourselves off from love, before a euphoric disco outro suggests second chances. “There’s a childish element to the album, where we are really experimenting with a lot of new novel sounds,” the brothers assert.

Now that Dana is 26 and Alden is 23, they are also making sense of where they come from. Though fictional, “Childhood Crush” reunites them with vocalist Cinya Khan — a frequent collaborator going all the way back to “Let’s Go To Trader Joe’s” — to reflect on moments of innocence, and when that innocence fractures. “Daydrinking In Springfield” warmly looks back on the apple orchard on a friend’s farm back in Oregon, where Dana and Alden used to get stoned, eat fruit, and have all the misadventures teenagers have on the outskirts of their hometown. “Obsidian” is a more warped depiction of their roots, a smoky groove soundtracking an imagined space Western inspired by the alien landscapes of eastern Oregon.

Though there is often a playfulness to Dana and Alden’s music, *Speedo* also presents two musicians coming into their own, with serious concerns about the world they’ve entered. As before, politics — particularly solidarity with the Palestinian people — are central to the duo’s music. “Making music as a political weapon is one of our main motivations,” Dana says. *Speedo*’s opener, “Norm,” was written for Norman Finkelstein, the scholar and activist who has long championed the Palestinian cause; it began with Dana writing on Finkelstein’s mother’s piano. Later, “Leila” is another tribute, this time to Palestinian activist Leila Khaled. “This album is a continuation of our politics, which have always been anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist,” Dana adds.

More than ever before, Dana and Alden have returned with an album kaleidoscopic in both theme and sound. “*Speedo* is really capturing a moment in time when both of our lives are changing so rapidly,” Dana explains. Old homes and new homes mingle, as do stories of adolescence with the tales of people Dana and Alden have never met. Throughout, the connective tissue is music that forever surprises and transforms, presenting an array of life experience and constantly making you see it from a new angle.

“We are always chasing something we haven’t heard before,” Dana and Alden conclude. “Sounds you don’t know, and you don’t know if anyone else will like it — but you like it.”