*“IT’S POETRY THAT DRIVES THIS ALBUM - THE STORIES OF THESE ARTISTS AND COUNTLESS OTHERS NOT NAMED BUT FELT - IS THE LEADING MOTIVATION. I WANTED TO HONOR & GIVE OFFERINGS - HOLD THEM IN MY BODY DREAM WITH THEM - SEND SWEETNESS.” – CAMAE AYEWA*

The songwriter, composer, vocalist, poet, and educator Camae Ayewa spent years organizing and performing in Philadelphia's underground music community before moving to Los Angeles to teach composition at the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music. She released her debut album as Moor Mother, *Fetish Bones*, in 2016, and has since put out an abundance of acclaimed music, both as a solo artist and in collaboration with other musicians who share her drive to dig up the untold. She has performed and recorded with the free jazz groups Irreversible Entanglements and the Art Ensemble of Chicago, and made records with billy woods, Mental Jewelry, and YATTA.

Coming out on July 1, *Jazz Codes* is her second and latest album for Anti- and a companion to her celebrated 2021 release *Black Encyclopedia of the Air*. *Jazz Codes* uses free jazz as a starting point but the collection continues the recent turn in Moor Mother's multifaceted catalog toward more melody, more singing voices, more choruses, more complexity. In its warm, densely layered course through jazz, blues, soul, hip-hop, and other Black classical traditions, *Jazz Codes* sets the ear blissfully adrift and unhitches the mind from habit.  Through her work, Ayewa illuminates the principles of her multidisciplinary collaborative practice Black Quantum Futurism, a theoretical framework for perceiving and adjusting reality through art, writing, music, and performance, informed by historical Black ontologies.

*Jazz Codes* sprung from a book of poems by the same name, a collection of poems written in honor of jazz and blues icons like Woody Shaw, Amina Claudine Myers, and Mary Lou Williams. During the pandemic lockdowns of early 2020 Ayewa connected with Swedish producer Olof Melander to see if he would send over a few jazz loops, with the intention of putting together a CD that would accompany the book's release. Melander sent her about a hundred tracks. The more Ayewa worked with them, the more the project spilled out from itself. Jazz Codes took on its own life; melodies sprouted around Ayewa's poems. In a shift from the noise-inflected sound of her previous albums, she began writing songs with R&B sweetness, songs that asked for singers to accompany her raps and spoken word transmissions. She sought out a roster of far-flung collaborators to help them bloom.

Working virtually, Ayewa drew in instrumentalists, like flutist Nicole Mitchell and harpist Mary Lattimore, and vocalists, like Melanie Charles and AKAI SOLO, into the album's growing space. On "ODE TO MARY," Ayewa's spoken poetry tangles with Orion Sun's fluttering vocal ad-libs and Jason Moran's dizzying piano lines. "SO SWEET AMINA" lets Aquiles Navarro's trumpet cast its glow onto ripples of Wolf Weston's searching voice. None of Ayewa's collaborators heard each other's takes before the songs were completed. She acted as the focusing point among them, finding affinities and synchronicities, braiding disparate pieces together into a reverberating whole. "I'm trying to get rid of people's timelines, to get rid of people's doomsday calendars—this speeding through life and reality," she says.