Thirty years ago long before green issues, climate change and deforestation became big issues, jazz keyboardist Merl Saunders saw for himself the impact that the destruction of the Amazonian rainforest was starting to have. He teamed up with the Grateful Dead's Jerry Garcia to create the LP 'Blues From The Rainforest'. They described their suite as "environmental earth music" and it drew much needed attention to the issue. Now, Merl's son, bassist Tony Saunders is following his father's work with the release of 'Peace To The Planet' credited to Tony's group, THE RAINFOREST BAND.

Tony says: "The rainforests around the world are disappearing at an alarming rate. This band has three strong souls as leaders and our mission is to bring awareness with our music to a cause that needs vigilant attention!" Those "strong souls" are, of course, bassist Saunders, guitarist Vernon" Ice" Black and keyboardist Sylvester. Black has co-produced the album with Ron Umile, boss of San Francisco Records – the issuing label. Amongst the other player on 'Peace To The Planet' are chart-topping saxophonist Jeff Ryan, noted keyboardist Gail Jhonson, drummer Austin White and percussionist Maquinto Brasil. It's Ryan's soulful sax that starts proceedings, leading on the big opener, 'S I Z'... shades of Ernie Watts and David Sanborn. That thunderous tune, though, isn't representative of the LP's overall mood which is much more gentle and reflective. Indeed Umile says that the music is intended to install calmness for a minute to allow reflection on how we can do our part to be part of the solution". Tracks like 'One More Time', 'Reflections' and the quite lovely 'Just Before Sunrise' create that introspective mood for sure. And to remind us about the specific problems of Amazonia, 'Verano Dias' is the album's big Latin moment... think Charlie Byrd and/or Earl Klugh.

'Peace To The Planet' is out now on San Francisco Records and, admirably, a portion of the proceeds from "Peace To The Planet" album sales will go to The Jerry Garcia Foundation and Rainforest Action Network.