

ORIGINALS



AFRICA/BRASS THE
JOHN COLTRANE
QUARTET





PHOTOGRAPH BY TED KIBBELL

SIDE ONE

1. AFRICA (John Coltrane)
(Jewel Music-BMI)

Time

16:26

SIDE TWO

1. GREENSLEEVES (P.D.)
2. BLUES MINOR (John Coltrane)
(Jewel Music-BMI)

Time

9:55

7:30



AFRICA/BRASS

The John Coltrane Quartet

John Coltrane is a quiet, powerfully-built young man who plays tenor saxophone quite unlike anyone in all of jazz. His style has been described as "saints of sound" or as "holy rollers." But, despite the religious imagery, or lack of accuracy, of such descriptions, it is a fact that Coltrane's style is wholly original and of growing influence among new jazz players.

Perhaps he himself would describe his style, along the lines of recent Down Beat article with writer Don McDowell: "I started experimenting because I was trying for more individual development. I even tried the long, rapid lines I've been using, but I was not successful at the time. But actually, I was beginning to apply the three-to-one chord approach and at this time the tendency was to play the entire scale in each chord. Therefore, I was using basically the same fast and sometimes soundless like glasses."

Although Coltrane has absorbed this experiment into his present style and moved on, its effect was shocking and intriguing in the jazz world.

Most critics, as this album will attest, Coltrane has absorbed by the rhythms of Africa. During the editing sessions for this album he noted, "There has been an influence of African rhythms in American jazz. It seems there are some things jazz can borrow harmonically, but I've been knocking myself out seeking something rhythmic. But nothing swings like 4:4. Those implied rhythms give me a lot of energy."

This research, probing, absorbing, and moving on is characteristic of Coltrane. His earliest influence was Lester Young, but his first horn was an alto sax, so he became attracted to John Hodges at that same time.

Toward the end of 1948 he left the band of the saxophone legend Charlie Parker. But when he joined Eddie Vinson's band it was as a tenor player and, as he noted, "a

wider area of listening opened up for me. On alto, Bird had been my whole influence, but on tenor I found there was no one man whose ideas were as dominant as Charlie's were on the alto."

His playing experience included stints with Vinson's band and those of Dizzy Gillespie, Johnny Hodges, Earl Bostic, Miles Davis, and Thelonious Monk. Today he leads his own band.

For this record, Coltrane composed two of the three selections, then discussed the orchestration thoroughly with Eric Dolphy, a reed player of enormous talent. Plastic McCoy Turner of the band is the drummer of the diverse group.

"Actually," Dolphy recalled, "All I did was orchestrate. Basically John and McCoy worked out the whole thing. And it all came from John; he knew exactly what he wanted. And that was, essentially, the feeling of his group."

AFRICA has an unusual form. Its melody had to be stated in the background because Coltrane is not tied down by chords. "I had a sound that I wanted to hear," Coltrane remarked of this piece. "The whole world revolved was about it. I wanted the band to have a drama. We used two basses. The main line carries all the way through the tune. One can carry almost the whole way through. One can have rhythmic lines around it. Eric, George and Art have worked together, and they know how to give and take." This work began while Coltrane's quartet had listened to many African recordings for research purposes. One had a bass line like a chant, and the group used it, working it into different shapes. In Los Angeles, John hit on using African rhythms, 4:4, and the group began to work it into the shape. Turner began to work it towards into the structure, and, in John's own words, "it's been growing ever since."

The instrumentation—trumpet, four French

horns, alto sax, baritone sax, two euphoniums, two basses, piano, drums, and vibes—is among the most unusual in jazz. But, Dolphy explained, "John thought this sound. He wanted horns. He wanted basses. He wanted horns, he wanted that mellow sound and power."

Coltrane heard the playback and nodded.

"It's the first time I've done any tune with that kind of rhythmic background. I've done this in 3:4 and 4:4. On the whole, I'm

quite pleased with Africa."

GREENELEVEN is an updating of the old, revered folk song. It's included in this set because Coltrane, in recent months, has been studying folk music. "It's one of the most beautiful songs in the world," he said. "It's written in 4:7, and we do it just about as written. There's a section for improvisation with a vamp to blow on."

The quartet has been playing this theme recently, and the arrangement is based on "Tears of a Drowned Man." "For me," Coltrane said, "Greeneleven is most enjoyable to play. Most of the time we get a nice pulse and groove. It was a challenge to play it. I wanted to keep the feeling of the feeling of the quartet. That's why we took the same voicings and the same rhythm. McCoy comes in."

BLUES MINOR is a piece the quartet has been playing of late. It was assembled at the request of manager. "It's a track," Dolphy said, "McCoy can play more. I wrote the parts and the band did it on one take." It swings loosely with the ease and drive of a head arrangement.

All in all, this album is representative of the changes of mind that John Coltrane, 34, on his way to something new and exciting, but pausing along the way to sum up the fresh and provocative work he has accomplished this far.

DOM CREDULI

1 AFRICA 16:26

(John Coltrane)

2 GREENSLEEVES 9:57

(Traditional; arranged by McCoy Tyner)

3 BLUES MINOR 7:20

(John Coltrane)

Personnel:

John Coltrane, soprano saxophone, tenor saxophone

McCoy Tyner, piano

Reggie Workman, bass

Elvin Jones, drums

Orchestra conducted by Eric Dolphy

Orchestra on GREENSLEEVES:

Booker Little (trumpet), Freddie Hubbard (trumpet), Julian Priester (euphonium)

Charles Greenlee (euphonium), Julius Watkins (French horn), Donald Corrado (French horn)

Bob Northern (French horn), Jimmy Buffington (French horn), Robert Swissheil (French horn)

Bill Barber (tuba), Eric Dolphy (alto saxophone, flute, bass clarinet)

Garvin Bushell (piccolo, reeds), Pat Patrick (baritone saxophone)

Orchestra on AFRICA and BLUES MINOR:

Booker Little (trumpet), Britt Woodman (trombone), Carl Bowman (euphonium)

Julius Watkins (French horn), Donald Corrado (French horn), Bob Northern (French horn)

Robert Swissheil (French horn), Bill Barber (tuba), Eric Dolphy (alto saxophone, flute, bass clarinet)

Pat Patrick (baritone saxophone), Art Davis (bass)

Produced by Creed Taylor

Recording engineer: Rudy Van Gelder

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AFRICA/BRASS

THE JOHN COLTRANE QUARTET

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OF JAZZ
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