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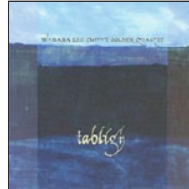
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## Tabligh

Wadada Leo Smith's Golden Quartet | Cuneiform Records

By Jerry D'Souza

Trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith's Golden Quartet is an evolving ensemble. The original line-up had Anthony Davis (piano), Jack DeJohnette (drums) and Malachi Favors Magoustos (bass). Then came Woody Aplanalp (guitar), Famoudou Don Moye (drums) and John Lindberg (drums). Smith had changed the line-up to give shape to his music. The current edition of the quartet retains Lindberg, but has Vijay Iyer (piano, Fender Rhodes, synthesizer) and Shannon Jackson (drums). As with the earlier tandems, *Tabligh's* every member is a loquacious improviser.



Smith makes his trumpet a clarion call for change. His notes are pure even as he engages them in strong emotions. His power is palpable but not overwhelming. All of this makes the music potent. The other members, strong in their technique, and forward in their creative impulses, elevate the compositions.

Smith's writing lays the groundwork, but there is plenty of room to dive into a tangent and surprise. The changes of meter and time, the juxtaposition of calm and turbulence all lend themselves to making the music a driving force.

"Tabligh," captures all these characteristics. Smith mutes the trumpet, his playing falls like a gentle shadow at dusk. He skitters and scampers, slows down and draws back opening the door for Iyer, Lindberg and Jackson. The mood is quiet, ideas are formed at a deliberate pace, the air is chamber-like. And then comes the spark from Jackson and the portrait becomes vibrant and pulsates as the band slaps deeper colors into the mix. The atmosphere churns and throbs as the quartet finds a new groove. But at the end of it all, the band shows how they can play off each other and in consonance, giving the music a stirring presence.

"Caravan of Winter" has a dark beauty. Smith works over the theme, hewing close to the melody. Iyer's concepts are fertile and he filters them through single run notes that turn into a welter. With Lindberg and Jackson interpolating the rhythm, they become the perfect cohorts. The music is remarkably crafted and cements the credentials of the quartet as a divining force.

**Track Listing:** Rosa Parks; DeJonette; Caravan of Winter; Tabligh.

**Personnel:** Wadada Leo Smith: trumpet; Vijay Iyer: piano, Fender Rhodes, synthesizer; John Lindberg: bass; Shannon Jackson: drums.

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