



all-about-jazz



Promote your music, your festival, your event, your website

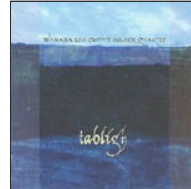
at **ALLABOUTJAZZ.com**

Tabligh

Wadada Leo Smith's Golden Quartet | Cuneiform Records

By Nic Jones

Trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith has always carved out his own territory in the music and *Tabligh* is one of the best realizations of his work on record. Working with this trumpet/keyboards/bass/drums quartet format for some time now, this set captures in true splendor how constructively that time has been spent.



The band is alert to every inflection of Smith's music and the leader responds largely with lines that seem less fractious than the work he's perhaps noted for. Thus his unaccompanied intro to the opening "Rosa Parks" is the work of a more reflective musician. At the same time it's the work, perhaps, of a more reflective individual, one for whom depth of knowledge is always an asset. That intro acts also as the most poised point of entry into a highly considered sound world where conventional instrumental roles are happily and tellingly subverted.

Shannon Jackson on drums plays no small part in bringing that world to life. On "DeJohnette" he's a veritable mine of rhythmic possibilities--especially against Vijay Iyer's understated piano--whilst bass player John Lindberg shows why he's made it onto record as many times as he has. The music that trio creates when Smith lays out proves also that the piano/bass/drums trio can put out something that isn't merely the product of high technique and surface sheen. When Smith enters, his work emphasizes, as well, the malleability of form. The music is a riot of color while, at the same time, it's profoundly measured, as if the group is collectively engaged in that tricky pursuit of contributing while simultaneously listening deeply.

On "Caravan Of Winter" Smith again acts as the summoner, with the other instruments coalescing around his call. Whether it's a call to arms or to prayer makes little difference, such is the reflective hue of music that doesn't seem to satisfyingly match it, especially when the nature of that reflection is so highly personal.

The lengthy title track brings this home. Iyer's very touch augments the color that stems from his fingers, and when a muted Smith joins him it serves to indicate the leader's perhaps negligible debt to Miles Davis in his electric years. Certainly the music is pervaded by a very different kind of rhythmic ambiguity to that which Davis was exploring with *On The Corner* (Columbia, 1972), and the results are compelling enough to suggest that individuals like Smith exemplify the wisdom of age.

Track Listing: Rosa Parks; DeJohnette; Caravan Of Winter; Tabligh.

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

[CD Review Center](#) | [Upcoming Release Center](#)

Click the [BACK](#) button to return to the previous page.

All material copyright © 2009 All About Jazz and contributing writers.
All rights reserved.