

## WADADA LEO SMITH'S GOLDEN QUARTET

Tabligh

Cuneiform

A venerable vanguard rebel for four decades, trumpeter/composer Wadada Leo Smith shows his cutting-edge artistry remains razor sharp on this disc graced with crackling technique, free expression and passion for the beautiful and the spiritual.

Smith once again demonstrates that his radicalism is not only dedicated to the overthrow of hackneyed ideas, but is also rooted in lyrical expression and an overarching sense of structure.

With his imagination and trumpet lines soaring in long, legato flights, Smith is blessed with robust, interactive support by keyboardist Vijay Iyer, bassist John Lindberg and drummer Shannon Jackson.

Iyer's on fire with Cecil Taylor-like ferocity seasoned with sonic surprises all his own. Lindberg's mood-shifting solos complement Smith's expansive narrative lines that resonate with the clarion call of a 21st century Fats Navarro, or muse introspectively, recalling the dark, mysterious poetics of Miles Davis.

Whether on his eloquent homage to civil rights hero Rosa Parks or his jumpin', thumpin' tribute to drummer Jack DeJohnette, Smith likes to sting like a bee and float like a butterfly. High above the rhythm section's sound and fury below, he plays serene, sometimes frenetic sounds, delivering his warm, wise soliloquies and witty storylines from a cosmic eye point-of-view.

Smith performs Friday at Firehouse 12 in New Haven. Information: 203-785-0468.

Essential download: "Tabligh"

-- Owen McNally

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