Chick Corea - The Song of Singing (1984)



1 Toy Room 2 Ballad I 3 Rhymes 4 Flesh 5 Ballad III 6 Nefertitti Chick Corea – piano Dave Holland – bass (fiddle) Barry Altschul – drums

This LP features the rhythm section of Circle (pianist Chick Corea, bassist Dave Holland and drummer Barry Altschul) playing rather advanced improvisations on group originals (highlighted by Holland's "Toy Room") and "Nefertiti." Influenced by the early Art Ensemble of Chicago, this music is rather free and avant-garde but rewards close listenings. ---Scott Yanow, allmusic.com

"The Song Of Singing" by Chick Corea is quite simply one of the greatest jazz trio albums of all-time. In my estimation, it ranks up there with classics like Bill Evans' Village Vanguard recordings, Monk's "Genius of Modern Music" volumes, "The Amazing Bud Powell" volumes, The Art Tatum "Group Masterpieces," and Paul Bley's "Closer." I know these albums cover a wide array of jazz styles, but what they all have in common is unparalleled musical creation and improvisation for their time. "The Song Of Singing," recorded for Blue Note in 1970, features the stellar trio of Corea, Dave Holland and Barry Altschul, and these three were a major musical force. In a few months they would join saxophonist Anthony Braxton to form the short-lived, but phenomenal avant-garde group Circle. (When Corea left Circle for the fusion group Return To Forever, Braxton, Holland and Altschul continued to play together through the mid 70s, most notably on Braxton's "Dortmund 1976" and Holland's "Conference For The Birds.") Unfortunately, the Circle titles, and of course this Corea disc, are now out of print domestically.

Luckily, "The Song Of Singing" is still available as an import. However, as with most Japanese

RVG titles, this version mirrors the original vinyl release, so you don't get the three bonus tracks that were included on the domestic release -- Ornette's "Blues Connotation," "Ballad II," and the lengthy, wild, free jazz tune, "Drone." What you do get is six inventive compositions performed by a trio that, once the song's theme is stated, just takes off into the farthest reaches of collective improvisation. But these three listen to each other very carefully, and as a result the solos soar together like a flock of swallows -- diving and turning suddenly, but always in unison. This is truly a group recording and not Corea with a rhythm section. It is a pleasure to behold! This "Song" is well worth singing. --- Michael Brad Richman, amazon.com

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