## Chick Corea – Return To Forever (1972)




*A1 Return To Forever 12:06 A2 Crystal Silence 6:55 A3 What Game Shall We Play Today 4:26 B Sometime Ago - La Fiesta 23:18* Composed By, Electric Piano – Chick Corea Drums, Percussion – Airto Moreira Electric Bass, Double Bass – Stanley Clarke Flute [Flutes], Soprano Saxophone – Joe Farrell Vocals, Percussion – Flora Purim

It seems that in any musical genre, the most creative work goes down during the days in which said genre is being created. For sure the most intense bebop happened in the early 40s, and although you may still hear some good bop to this day, it will never be quite the same again. The same could also be said for jazz fusion, a genre that became an easy target for criticism over time, but in the heady days of its inception, some really interesting music was created under the fusion moniker, which leads us to Chick Corea's first attempt to lead a fusion group while recording the album, "Return to Forever". Chick was hardly new to the fusion world at the time of this recording, he had already participated on several ground breaking albums by Miles Davis, but, as stated earlier, "Return to Forever" was Chick's first fusion recording as band leader. Corea's albums as leader prior to this were definitely shaking up the jazz world, whether he was making cutting edge post bop tracks with Roy Haynes, or avant-garde excursions with Anthony Braxton, Chick was definitely a pianist to watch in the early 70s.

Like many early fusion recordings, a 'mystical' scent of hippie incense hangs heavy over "Return". Psychedelic rock and progressive rock were at a peak during this time, and their sometimes indulgent excesses were an influence on many early fusion albums. The lengthy multi-sectioned songs on here, as well as Flora Purim's exotic wordless vocals and a good dose of spacey reverb give "Return" a definite art rock flavor, but the long-line virtuoso solos from Chick, and everyone else, are brought about by these musician's well trained background in jazz. Chick's solos during this time were heavily influenced by his interest in Afro-Cuban jazz, his montuno driven rhythms contain some of the fiercest playing of his entire career. Unfortunately, in a few years after this recording, much of that aggressive Afro-Cuban influence will leave Chick's playing for good. Rising to Chick's energetic challenge, bassist Stanley Clarke

man handles the difficult and bulky stand-up bass to play driving rhythms reminiscent of Cream and James Brown, the sort of bass lines that are more easily played on an electric bass.

All of the tracks on here are excellent, but title track, “Return to Forever” and side two’s lengthy “Sometime Ago-La Fiesta” stand out in the way that the whole band comes together for some very intense interplay driven by Corea’s quasi-montuno rhythmic figures. This will always be Chick Corea’s best fusion album, later attempts in this genre by him seem to get bogged down with too many compositional ideas, and too much ‘cheerful’ cuteness. ---jazzmusicarchives.com

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