

Chick Corea – The Ultimate Adventure (2006)

Written by bluesever

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1 *Three Ghouls, Pt. 1* 2 *Three Ghouls, Pt. 2* 3 *Three Ghouls, Pt. 3* 4 *City Of Brass*
5 *Queen Tedmur* 6 *El Stephen, Pt. 1* 7 *El Stephen, Pt. 2* 8 *King & Queen* 9 *Moseb*
10 *The Executioner, Pt. 1* 11 *Moseb The Executioner, Pt. 2* 12 *Moseb The Executioner, Pt. 3*
13 *North Africa* 14 *Flight From Karoof, Pt. 1* 15 *Flight From Karoof, Pt. 2* 16 *Planes Of*
17 *Existence, Pt. 1* 18 *Arabian Nights, Pt. 1* 19 *Arabian Nights, Pt. 2* 20 *Gods & Devils* 21
22 *Planes Of Existence, Pt. 2* Acoustic Guitar, Guitar – Frank Gambale Bass Clarinet,
Tenor Saxophone – Tim Garland Bass, Handclaps [Palmas] – Carlos Benavent* Drums –
Tom Brechtlein, Vinnie Colaiuta Drums, Handclaps [Palmas] – Steve Gadd Flute – Hubert
Laws Flute, Flute [Alto], Soprano Saxophone, Handclaps [Palmas] – Jorge Pardo
Percussion – Hossam Ramzy Percussion, Tambourine, Pandeiro, Handclaps [Palmas] –
Rubem Dantas Percussion, Vocals, Shaker – Aírto Moreira Synthesizer, Percussion,
Piano, Electric Piano, Percussion, Handclaps – Chick Corea

For the second time in two years, Chick Corea has assembled a band to give aural illustration to the fantasy writings of L. Ron Hubbard. For those who have trouble with Hubbard and his teachings, this may be a red flag to avoid the record altogether. *The Ultimate Adventure* is a tale that draws on characters from the *Arabian Nights* -- there is an ad for the book in the back of the CD booklet. With that out of the way, one has to deal with the music entirely on its own terms. Corea has spent decades playing both electric and acoustic jazz. This is the first time since 1976's *My Spanish Heart* that he has woven his love of both so completely into a single album. There are more than a few echoes here that call upon the ghosts of the earliest Return to Forever band -- primarily in the gorgeous flute playing of Hubert Laws and Jorge Pardo, in the saxophone artistry of Tim Garland, the drumming of Steve Gadd, and the percussion wizardry of not only Aírto Moreira, but also of Hossam Ramzy -- just to name a few of this album's players. But as always, it's Corea's compositions and playing that make or break any of his outings. This one is complex, knotty, and contains nuevo flamenco sketches and exotic melodic grooves and rhythms from "North Africa" and the Middle East. The second part of the opening suite "Three Ghouls" -- which makes it ghoulish number two, apparently -- showcases Corea on the electric piano and electronic percussion with Laws playing soulful and slightly funky. His flute gets double-tracked as it floats above Moreira and bassist Carlos Benavent. It's spacey,

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airy groove is intoxicating. It morphs into the knotty percussive and slightly "out" part three, where Palmas -- handclapped rhythms -- by Corea, Gadd, and Benavent are contrasted to the dissonant acoustic piano and funky Rhodes woven side by side in counterpoint. This stands in contrast to the electric, short, fused-out, three-part suite entitled "Moseb the Executioner." The first part is a tangled mix up of Garland and Corea's Rhodes. It ends in a percussion orgy by Moreira and Ruben Dantas with Palmas by the entire band. There are gorgeous melodic interludes in "North Africa" courtesy of Pardo and Corea. "Flight from Karoo" is simply a fusion gem. Ultimately, Ultimate Adventure works extremely well; it's inspired, takes chances, and is compositionally a small wonder. Above all, it sounds like Corea and his band had a ball making it. Recommended for fusion-heads. ---Thom Jurek, allmusic.com

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