

Yusef Lateef & Adam Rudolph - Beyond the Sky (2000)

Written by bluesever

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1 *Beyond The Sky* 3:08 2 *Origin Of A Mother Tongue* 4:31 3 *Evanescent Symmetries* 8:43 4 *Handful Of Gifts* 6:58 5 *Within Yourself* 9:03 6 *Three Dreams* 8:21 7 *Iqbal Remembered* 9:14 8 *Sun Cup* 5:17 9 *Hunger And Tears* 11:49 10 *Beyond The Sky, Part 2* 4:27 Joseph Bowie - Conch Shell, Congas, Percussion, Sabar, Trombone Ralph Jones - Bassoon, Clarinet (Bass), Flutes, Hichiriki, Nepalese Flute, Sax (Soprano), Sax (Tenor) Yusef Lateef - Flute, Nepalese Flute, Sax (Alto), Sax (Tenor), Shenai Charles Moore - Batanon, Conch Shell, Flugelhorn, Karinyan, Trumpet Adam Rudolph - African Harp, Congas, Djembe, Kalangu, MIDI, Percussion, Udu

Yusef Lateef is usually seen as a jazz player who has integrated African and Asian music into his work instead of a world-music pioneer. Perhaps this is a matter of timing: When Don Cherry and others made their pivotal recordings in the early and mid-'70s, the multi-instrumentalist was making a string of eclectic Atlantic recordings that obscured his accomplishments in this area. Still, in recent years, Lateef's collaboration with percussionist Adam Rudolph provides a bright backlight on his previous work, as well as confirming his ongoing artistic vitality.

Beyond the Sky is a thoroughly collaborative effort. Rudolph penned three of the program's 10 compositions and cowrote an additional three with Lateef. Even though the instrumentation ranges from indigenous flutes and drums to electro-acoustic computer rigs, and musicians are platooned at an almost track-by-track pace, the program has a cohesive, unforced, contemplative carriage. Arguably, the program has a somewhat limited spectrum of expression, as it hovers above the somnambular and sufficiently below the simmering. Still, an impressive array of musicians-trombonist Joseph Bowie and bass player Mark Helias being the best known-contribute engaging performances.

For every track that basks in the glow of Lateef's unadorned yet luminous flute melodies,

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highlighted by Rudolph's well-placed percussion colors or buoyed by his percolating polyrhythms, there are probing pieces, like "Evanescent Symmetries" and "Handful of Gifts," that juxtapose condensed, often angular ensemble passages with open improvisational space that allows the traditional and the postmodern to commingle. On such compositions, wind player Ralph, pianist Alex Marcelo, trumpeter Charles Moore and guitarist/signal processor M. Abidh Waugh make substantive contributions.

Some albums are a success by leaving its audience wanting more, while others are deemed deficient for the same reason. It is a mixed blessing in the case of Beyond the Sky, as Lateef's distinctive tenor saxophone solos are few and far between. ---Bill Shoemaker, jazztimes.com

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