

Miles Davis - In A Silent Way (1969)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Shhh / Peaceful* - 18:19 *"Shhh"* – 6:14 *"Peaceful"* – 5:42 *"Shhh"* – 6:20 2. *In a Silent Way / It's About That Time* - 19:53 *"In a Silent Way" (Joe Zawinul)* – 4:11 *"It's About That Time" (Miles Davis & Joe Zawinul)* – 11:27 *"In a Silent Way" (Joe Zawinul)* – 4:14

Musicians Miles Davis – trumpet Wayne Shorter – soprano saxophone John McLaughlin – electric guitar Chick Corea – electric piano Herbie Hancock – electric piano
Joe Zawinul – organ Dave Holland – double bass Tony Williams – drums

Miles Davis's famous mid-1960s quintet, featuring saxophonist Wayne Shorter and pianist Herbie Hancock, was intact until just a few weeks before his new, electric ensemble recorded *In a Silent Way*. Legendary as a kind of line in the sand challenging jazz fans during the ascendance of electric, psychedelic rock, *In a Silent Way* hinted at the repetitive polyrhythms Davis would employ throughout the early 1970s. It also partook generously of electric piano and bass and rekindled the tonal palette that Davis had explored famously with *Kind of Blue*. But *In a Silent Way* remains a clearly electric jazz record, part ambient color exploration, part rock-tinged energy and vibe, and part outright maverick creativity. Davis takes many long, breathy solos, and they glisten in a burnished blue against his new group's strange admixture of musical moods. ~ Andrew Bartlett

"*In a Silent Way*" single-handedly ushered in a new era of improvised music blending the sophisticated modes of jazz, the up-tempo pulse of rock and the cool other-worldliness of ambient - a term coined 12 years later by Brian Eno. According to John McLaughlin, Miles was an inspirational band leader who was able to inspire unique performances by bringing together the best young musicians and flexibly original material.

The 18 minute opening track "*Shh Peaceful*" finds the musicians moving in and out of the simple musical forms together building to a shared climax from what has come before. Resolve

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to the after-glow of "In a Silent Way" - Joe Zawinul's composition recalling the mountains of his boyhood home in Austria. Miles instructed McLaughlin to "play the melody but not the chords". McLaughlin came up with something that uniquely held the mood while allowing Miles and saxophonist Wayne Shorter to play the theme and evoke a haunting yet hopeful mood inherent in the composition.

"It's about that Time" emerges full-grown from that dream-trance. Clocking a 4-4 rock beat (Tony Williams) along with a spacious, stuttering bass beat (Dave Holland), Miles states an open ended theme underpinned by electric guitar (McLaughlin) and multiple keyboards (Corea, Hancock, Zawinul). Solos happen but the evolving blend dances around the solid pulse bringing to a boil the passions that have been simmering and building from the beginning. More than anything the music evokes the sensuous feel of late night sex. --- Ron Hollings, Editorial Reviews

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