

Ornette Coleman - Body Meta (1976)

Written by bluesever

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1.Voice Poetry 2.Home Grown 3.Macho Woman 4.Fou Amour 5.European Echoes

Ornette Coleman (alto saxophone) Charles Ellerbee, Bern Nix (guitar) Jamaaladeen Tacuma (bass) Ronald Shannon Jackson (drums)

The establishing of Ornette Coleman's self-determining Artists House label and his electric double-trio Prime Time coincided with the release of *Body Meta*, which changed many of the business and musical contours of jazz in the mid- to late '70s. Coleman proved that jazz musicians could determine their own fate and market their music without a major-label contract. He also advanced the orientation of jazz away from swing rhythms and into a deeper blues driven by funk and angular electric guitars inspired by the precepts of Thelonious Monk. A music that turned out to be crazier than most while attempting to be more people-oriented resulted in controversy. It was an indisputable new music amalgam that Coleman could claim as his own, yet which sprung forth into the so-called M-Base music movement of New York City. Jamaaladeen Tacuma on electric bass guitar, Bern Nix and Charlie Ellerbe on electric guitars, drummers Denardo Coleman and Ronald Shannon Jackson comprised the first Prime Time band heard here. They are loud, boisterous, imaginative, unfettered by conventional devices, and wail beyond compare with Coleman within relatively funky, straight beats. "Voice Poetry" sets the tone, a boogaloo funk with an unmistakable kinship to the churning Bo Diddley beat, Coleman's obtuse alto sax between the guitarists' obtuse castings create incessant, passionate, and obsessed music. Where "Home Grown" uses the same wall-rattling sound within repeated lines, there are dense and bulky layers embedded deeply in the thick rhythms. Fans of Coleman will relate more to "Macho Woman," which spurs on a sound similar to his style from years past, as the brief melody gives way to solos. "Fou Amour" is a soulful, off-minor, bitter, and soured ballad, while "European Echoes" is a militaristic waltz -- hardly a traipse through flowers -- with various free sections. As every track is different, Coleman's vision has a diffuse focus, but it's clear that things have changed. Even his personal sound is more pronounced, unleashed from shackles, and more difficult to pin down. In addition, the CD version has updated liner notes written by Coleman that were not included on the original LP. Whether this was a breakthrough recording or an example of cliff diving is solely up to the listener. Either way, this is a stunning example of modernity taken to the extreme, and Coleman gets sole credit for this direction in

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modern creative music. The first acid jazz? ---Michael G. Nastos

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