Pharoah Sanders – Love in Us All (1973)



1. Love Is Everywhere 2. To John Credits: Pharoah Sanders - composer, tenor & soprano saxophones, flute James Branch - flute Joe Bonner - piano Cecil McBee - bass Norman Connors - drums Badal Roy, James Mtume, Lawrence Killian – percussion

Recorded near the end of Pharoah Sanders' tenure at Impulse, Love in Us All consists of two extended compositions. Together, they serve as an aural representation of the way Sanders' music polarized the jazz world at the time. Like many of his "New Thing" peers, the saxophonist sought the sound world beyond the constraints of conventional harmony. This often translated into music played at the grating, far reaches of his instrument. "To John" finds Sanders in this territory. His solo begins with Coltrane-isms of short motive development before stretching out into a more personal sound. Finding himself engulfed by a rising musical tide, he plays like he's fighting desperately to stay above it. Soon his saxophone takes on a sorrowful tone as if admitting inevitable defeat. With little optimism apparent, it ultimately communicates a sense of emptiness.

However, the often one-dimensional criticism of Sanders as an angry, confrontational musician fails to take in the ragged beauty of a work like "Love Is Everywhere." The song offers little explanation as to what the furor was all about. It begins with an exquisite bass vamp that the song builds from. "Love is everywhere" is repeatedly and passionately shouted as the music escalates into a disorienting swirl of sound. Sanders enters midway through with a surprisingly restrained and lyrical solo on soprano. These two songs hardly seem to belong on the same album and are best approached separately. Many of the players who took musical and philosophical inspiration from John Coltrane failed to translate it into resonant works of their own. Sanders' unsuccessful attempt on "To John" falls in this category. Yet, in a way, Coltrane himself never created a work as emotionally direct as "Love Is Everywhere." ~ Nathan Bush

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