

Charles Tolliver - Mosaic Select 20 (2005)

Wpisany przez bluesever

Środa, 21 Grudzień 2011 19:23 - Zmieniony Czwartek, 14 Sierpień 2014 12:44

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DISC ONE (A) 01. *Drought* 9:20 (Charles Tolliver) 02. *Felicite* 8:23 (Cecil McBee) 03. *Oriente* 17:36 (Stanley Cowell) 04. *Spanning* 8:24 (Charles Tolliver) 05. *Wilpan's* 10:35 (Cecil McBee) 06. *Our Second Father* (Dedicated to the memory of John Coltrane) 13:20 (Charles Tolliver)

DISC TWO (B) 01. *Drought* 12:18 (Charles Tolliver) 02. *Stretch* 10:39 (Charles Tolliver) 03. *Truth* 7:04 (Charles Tolliver) 04. *Effi* 10:43 (Stanley Cowell) 05. *'Round Midnight* 8:36 (Thelonious Monk)

DISC THREE
(A) 01. *On The Nile* 13:33 (Charles Tolliver) 02. *Ruthie's Heart* (Dedicated to my mother) 18:46 (Charles Tolliver) 03. *Repetition* 8:51 (Neal Hefti)

(B)
04. *Impact* 7:28 (Charles Tolliver) 05. *Our Second Father* (Dedicated to the memory of John Coltrane) 20:15 (Charles Tolliver) 06. *Earl's World* (Dedicated to my brother) (B) 6:24 (Charles Tolliver)

Musicians: Charles Tolliver, trumpet; Stanley Cowell, piano; Cecil McBee, bass; Jimmy Hopps, drums. Recorded live at Slug's Saloon, New York City on May 1, 1970

In the early 1970s, trumpeter Charles Tolliver trafficked compellingly in the overlap between hard-bop and the avant-garde, leading an unconventional big band and an exploratory quartet called Music Inc. He documented both groups on his own self-sustaining label, Strata-East. This limited edition three-disc set, only available from mosaicrecords.com, eschews the big band material for a pair of live quartet engagements previously heard on three Strata-East LPs, now unfortunately out of print. It's a vital document for anyone who admires the crackling mid-to-late-'60s aesthetic of Jackie McLean, with whom Tolliver apprenticed, and Freddie Hubbard, to whom he's reflexively compared.

The set's first disc chronicles an evening at Slugs' Saloon on Manhattan's Lower East Side--May 1, 1970, to be exact. Tolliver is backed by his longtime compatriots Stanley Cowell and Cecil McBee, on piano and bass, respectively; and by the less-familiar drummer Jimmy

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Hopps. The vibe is intense, especially on Tolliver's gatecrashing opener, "Drought," which alone would justify his inclusion among the era's standout trumpet dramatists. Abstract lyricism prevails as well, most effectively on Cowell's "Orientale." And on "Our Second Father," Tolliver spells out his indebtedness to the modalities--and, one suspects, the stamina--of John Coltrane.

Disc two, originally issued as Music Inc. Live in Tokyo, consists of a concert performance on December 7, 1973, in that city's Yubinchoin Hall. Cowell is the lone holdover here; Clint Houston fulfills bass duties and Clifford Barbaro plays drums. Tolliver begins again with "Drought," although Barbaro seems less comfortable than Hopps with the tune's brisk tempo. The band sounds better on Cowell's waltz "Effi," and on a fervently insistent version of Thelonious Monk's "Round Midnight." But uneven sound quality, and the relative shortcomings of the rhythm section, slightly mars this date.

Previously unreleased selections from both live recordings comprise the third disc of the set. Perhaps predictably, the three tracks culled from Slugs' are stronger than the three captured in Tokyo: "On the Nile" is a dramatic polyrhythmic waltz; "Ruthie's Heart," a modal churner; and "Repetition," a winning Neal Hefti number arranged with a Latin-bop feel. But the Tokyo recordings are powerful too--especially "Impact," a groove anthem that would later serve as the title track for a brilliant Strata-East big band LP. It's possible that album, too, will get the reissue treatment, as Mosaic cofounder Michael Cuscuna hints in his liner essay. One can only hope so, as Tolliver's music emphatically deserves to be heard. ---Nate Chinen, jazztimes.com

"Musically, the question on the table for Tolliver's generation at the dawn of Strata-East's inception was deciding what parts of bebop tradition remained visible in an age set on fire by Ornette Coleman, Albert Ayler, Cecil Taylor and Sun Ra. As can be heard on this and his other Strata-East releases, Tolliver's Music Inc group proposed clear answers to such questions, with meaty and melodious playing that celebrated the classical virtues of swing, virtuosity and the unbridled expressionism and spontaneity that were the 60's stock-in-trade. Call it a case of eating your cake and immolating it too." -Greg Tate, original CD liner notes

Charles Tolliver emerged in 1965 as a strong and innovative trumpeter and composer. Hard bop was riding strong and welcoming adventurous new voices. After important tenures with Jackie McLean, Gerald Wilson, Max Roach and Andrew Hill, Tolliver formed his own quartet, which he dubbed Music Inc.

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A quartet is a demanding setting for a trumpeter, but Tolliver was never at a loss for chops or ideas. He recorded the band live at Slug's in New York in 1970 and at a Tokyo concert in 1973 for his own Strata-East label. These have long since become collectors' items and are now being reissued with 41 minutes of unissued material from Slug's and 34 minutes from Tokyo.

Stanley Cowell is the pianist (and contributing composer) throughout. Cecil McBee and Jimmy Hopps are on the Slug's session while Clint Houston and Clifford Barbro are on the Japanese concert. With the exception of Neal Hefti's "Repetition" and Monk's "Round Midnight", the band's book consisted of the exceptional originals by Tolliver, Cowell and McBee.

The musicians in Music, Inc challenged each other but never left the audience behind. This was state-of-the-art hard bop played in all its diversity from harmonically dense mazes to modal open forms to gorgeous ballads. And these men could sustain interest with each other and the listener through sheer creative power.

As the music on this set proves, Tolliver's Music Inc met every challenge and then some. These live recordings from 1970 and '73 embrace hard bop in all its various approaches and epitomize the teamwork that is so essential to any successful jazz performance. And Charles's endurance is absolutely remarkable. --- allaboutjazz.com

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