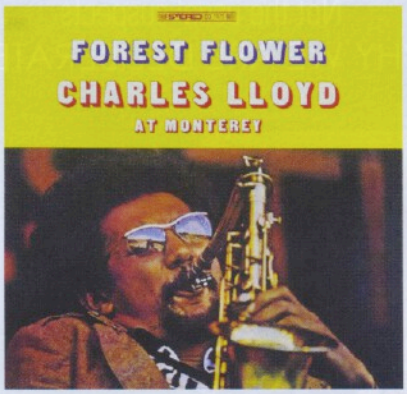


Forest Flower

180g

Charles Lloyd

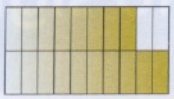
Speakers Corner/Atlantic 1473

It seems that almost every gem from the 1950s and 1960s jazz catalogue has been mined time and again, so Speakers Corner Kai Seemann could not believe his good fortune when *Forest Flower* turned up as available. It's not like Charles Lloyd has been flying under the radar. 78 years old and still going strong as a recording artist and performer, Lloyd's string of CDs for the ECM label has enjoyed critical praise and numerous awards for 25 years.

Before heading off to ECM, however, Lloyd established himself as a superstar. He became one of the few jazz artists to sell over a million copies of a record (with *Forest Flower*) and opened for some of the greatest rock bands of the 1960s. His combination of what became known as world music influences, classical music, and jazz spoke to the flower power generation.

Which brings us back to *Forest Flower*, an album title close enough to "flower child" to suggest Lloyd's lasting reputation in many jazz lovers' minds. The album includes an extended version of one of Lloyd's best known songs—'Forest Flower'—presented in two parts ("sunrise" and "sunset") that takes up side one. Side two includes three songs—'Sorcery', 'Song of Her' and 'East of the Sun'. The album is labelled "At Monterey" referring to the group's performance at the Monterey Jazz Festival on September 18, 1966. However, 'Sorcery' and 'Song of Her' were recorded in the Atlantic Recording Studio in New York ten days earlier. Canned applause is added to the studio recordings, but the overall live ambient noise (including airplane noise) is missing. The live and studio performances blend well together, showcasing Lloyd's early sophistication that was accessible enough to a crossover audience to sell a boatload of records and make him a superstar. Listened to today, the performances still sound fresh and better than almost anything else that has come along in its wake. This is an essential jazz recording that belongs in the collection of any music lover with the slightest pretence of an interest in jazz.

The live recording was done by Wally Heider, who specialised in on-site recording and who made some of the best sounding live recordings of the twentieth century. The studio recording is not credited, but was almost certainly done by Atlantic's Tom Dowd at his purpose built studio on the corner of Broadway and 60th Street on New York's upper west side. Both the live and studio sound of the original are quite nice – significantly better than most live recordings and top-notch Atlantic studio sound. Kevin Gray of Coherent Audio mastered this reissue from the original master tapes, and the resulting sound is outstanding. Highest recommendation. **DD**

RECORDING

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