

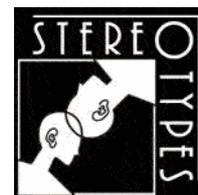
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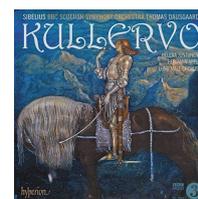


The Flowering Of The Original Charles Lloyd Quartet – Speakers Corner Records

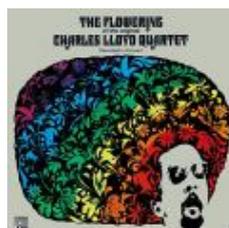
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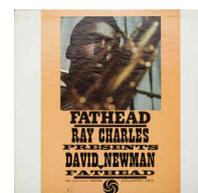
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The Flowering Of The Original Charles Lloyd Quartet/Recorded in Concert – Atlantic Records SD 1586 (1966)/Speakers Corner records (2019)



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180-gram stereo vinyl, 42:39 ****1/2:

(Charles Lloyd – tenor saxophone, flute; Keith Jarrett – piano; Cecil McBee – bass; Jack DeJohnette – drums)

Like various musicians growing up in the 40's Charles Lloyd was influenced by the radio, especially artists like Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday, Lester Young, Coleman Hawkins and Charlie Parker. His first impactful foray into jazz was as musical director for Chico Hamilton, replacing Eric Dolphy. Albums like *Passin' Thru* and *Man From Two Worlds* were noteworthy as Lloyd served as composer and arranger for most of the tracks. When he signed with Columbia in 1964 as a band leader, both *Discovery* and *Of Course, Of Course* established him as a rising jazz star. Lloyd formed a quartet with Keith Jarrett (piano), Cecil McBee (bass) and Jack DeJohnette (drums) in 1966 building on his emerging status.. The studio album *Forest Flower* became a global phenomenon and was vital in the incorporation of *world music* into the *jazz* idiom. In the 1970's Lloyd retreated from the jazz community, but became active as a studio and live performer with The Beach Boys. He returned to his natural genre in 1989 with ECM Records. Amazingly, he records with a variety of artists from different styles and backgrounds, an inspiration to many.

Speakers Corner has released a 180-gram vinyl of *The Flowering Of The Original Charles Lloyd Quartet/Recorded In Concert*. This live performance by The Charles Lloyd Quartet featured a 1966 set recorded at Aulean Hall in Oslo Norway. Critics view this album as the quintessential live performance of this legendary group. This is an amazing ensemble, comprised of four musicians who would flourish as recording artists and band leaders. Side One opens with an inspired cover of Kurt Weill's Broadway ditty, "Speak Low". This song began as a popular music standard, but achieved elevated jazz status with recordings by Billie Holiday, Chet Baker, Gerry Mulligan, Bill Evans and John Coltrane to name a few. After a brief melancholic intro by Lloyd on tenor, there is a seamless tempo uptick. Jack DeJohnette's propulsive drumming sets the stage for some impressive solo work. Charles Lloyd is up first with searing free-form riffing. Keith Jarrett follows with a percolating (especially right hand) run that showcases his inimitable style. Cecil McBee glides into duet mode before a challenging extended double bass run. Lloyd jumps in and grabs the lead with a unusual higher-register emphasis. The Lloyd-penned medley, "Love-In/Island Blues" shifts mood with flute lead. Jarrett's exquisite technique is muscular and soulful. Lloyd's flute solo in contrast is evocative and melodic. There is a slow blues transition that infuses a swaying vibe. Jarrett's second solo is equally compelling with grittiness and lyricism. McBee's sprightly bass on his own composition,



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"Wilpan's" leads into a complex melody. Jarrett is explosive with furious momentum that is matched by DeJohnette. Returning to tenor, Lloyd adds texture and color, at times in tandem with McBee. The overall performance has a traditional jazz feel with sharp punctuation and saxophone playing over a repeat vamp.

Side Two starts with the longest track on the album, an update to Chico Hamilton alumnus Gabor Szabo's "Lady Gabor". Renamed "Gypsy '66", this is nothing short of mesmerizing. Lloyd initiates with exotic flute imagery as DeJohnette (who appears to always be in rhythmic transcendence) leads a tightly syncopated tempo. As Lloyd soars on flute, his tonality mellows with a hushed elegance. Then there is a seismic change. Jarrett contributes a mind-bending solo. He begins by plucking the strings inside the piano like a harp. Eventually he adds piano to this as Lloyd returns to flute with a fevered improvisational swagger. Wherever the quartet goes, drummer DeJohnette maintains the cohesion and vibrancy. The music always flows like a river current with hypnotic eloquence. The 14:11 musical journey fades to silence as a stunned crowd offers a delayed round of applause. It seems fitting that Charles Lloyd would end with a hometown-inspired medley, "Goin' To Memphis/Island Blues". The first part is a flat-out Southern groove fest with Jarrett on lead. His depth of feeling is extraordinary. The technical agility features sudden chord changes and scintillating runs. Lloyd joins on sax as a medium-swing structure ensues. The quartet reprises "Island Blues" in a wonderful finale.

Speakers Corner Records has done a stellar job in re-mastering *The Flowering* to 180-gram vinyl. The overall sound mix is excellent. Drums and double bass solidify the bottom end. Both tenor saxophone and flute are centered and sound crisp without any shrillness. The front cover painting (of Lloyd with a psychedelic flower Afro) by Jacques Richez is striking and reminiscent of the era. There are no hisses or pops on the pressing.

TrackList:

Side One: Speak Low; Love-In/Island Blues; Wilpan's
Side Two: Gypsy '66; Goin' To Memphis/Island Blues

—Robbie Gerson



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