

MASTERING EQUIPMENT

*Merging Technologies
Hapi Digital Converter*

Weiss Saracon Sample Rate Conversion Software

Weiss POW-r Dithering Software

*Analog: Studer 810 Reel to Reel with
Custom by JRF Magnetics & Siltech wiring
Nagra 4S custom by JRF Magnetics*

*Aria tape head pre-amp by ATR Services
Retro Instruments 2A3 Dual-channel tube program equalizer
Sontec MEP-250EX Parametric EQs*

*VPI Classic Turntable w/ Benz Wood Cartridge
Rogue Audio Phone Pre-amp*

*Power Sources: PS Audio P10 Power Plant
and Power Plant 300*

*Power Cords: Purist Audio Design, Essential Sound Products,
Speltz Anti-Cables*

*Vibration Control: Symposium Acoustics Rollerblocks,
Ultra platforms, Svelte shelves*

*Sonic Studio CD.1 Professional CD Burner
using Mitsui Gold Archival CD's*

Facts about this Recording

John Coltrane, tenor saxophone

McCoy Tyner, piano

Reggie Workman, bass (#7)

Jimmy Garrison, bass (all others)

Elvin Jones, drums

Original Sessions Produced by Bob Thiele

Recorded at the Van Gelder Studio, Englewood Cliffs,

New Jersey on December 21, 1961 (#7), September 18, 1962 (#6,8)

and November 13, 1962 (#1-5).

Engineer: Rudy Van Gelder

Transferred from a Impulse Records 4-track tape

John Coltrane Quartet

Ballads



HIGH DEFINITION TAPE TRANSFER S



John Coltrane has on occasion expressed puzzlement over such descriptions of himself as "best of the angry tenors."

"I guess," he once said, "they say that because I play the horn hard."

Coltrane is, as a matter of fact, one of the gentlest and quietest people I've met in jazz. And, two or three years ago, he was just about the shyest.

Not that he has become a study in effusive cameraderie. But he has emerged considerably from that cocoon of quiet in which he lived his off-stage life. He talks more now, he laughs more readily, he seems more assured.

It used to be that, on stage, he'd plant his feet solidly apart, shut his eyes and, thus unshakably, play his music straight at you. Now he seems willing to let you approach him and get it for yourself. The music comes out, instead of being thrust out.

I wish I were one of those sages who can say, "Man, I dug Bird the first time I heard him." I didn't: I thought Bird was ridiculous, and it took some exposure to his music for me to get it. Similarly, I thought Coltrane was ridiculous. It was puzzlement over the simplicity and sincerity of the man that led me to re-examine his playing. And lo! I found that under the sheets of sound was music of exceptional lyricism.

For a time, I operated on the theory that lyricism was a new quality in Coltrane's playing. Then I got my hands on one of the first albums he ever made. It was done in 1955, with Tadd Dameron. All that is Coltrane was there then, including the lyricism. Well, wrong again.

His playing has, of course, undergone considerable evolution since 1955. Once, a year or two ago, I mentioned to him how little I'd got out of his playing before and how much I was getting now. I said I didn't know whether his playing had changed or I was listening and understanding better. "Probably a little of each," he observed.

After a reflective moment, he said, "I guess my playing must have changed. You're the second person who's told me that recently."

"Who was the other one?"

"My wife," he said.

Bob Thiele, who produced this record, thinks that Trane's playing has undergone another spurt of rapid evolution lately, and suspects that an association with Duke Ellington on another Impulse! album (A-30 Duke Ellington and John Coltrane) may have prompted it. When Bob

asked John to do a retake on one tune, Ellington said, "Don't ask him to do another. He'll end up imitating himself."

Whether it was the influence of Ellington or whatever, John's playing does seem to have taken another large, if not giant, step. He is more direct now, and his solos seem tighter, shorter, more disciplined of organization, which overcomes the one reservation I had maintained about his music.

An album of ballads therefore seemed most in order. Besides, John wanted to do one. Asked why, he said, "Variety." Meaning a change of pace. And perhaps he wanted to apprise those who haven't discovered it that he can be lyrical.

Donald Byrd once said, "After all these years of playing, I've come to the conclusion that one of the most difficult things to do is play a melody straight and play it well, with good tone and feeling."

That is what John does in this album. Up-tempo playing presents one set of difficulties; ballads present another. An unrecovered error is more conspicuous in a ballad than in a stream of high-speed notes.

John had no trouble.

It was one of the most curious record dates I have ever attended. Excepting It's Easy to Remember, the quartet had never played any of the tunes before. They arrived with music-store sheet music of the songs. Coltrane, McCoy Tyner, Jimmy Garrison, and Elvin Jones would discuss each tune, write out copies of the changes they would use, semi-rehearse for a half hour, and then do it. Usually the tune was done in one take.

An exception was All or Nothing at All, on his copy of which John had written "Arabic feeling." Because it was rhythmically more complex than the others, it got off to a couple of false starts. Then they did it without difficulty. John played the tunes straight, in the in-choruses, unless you count his lovely phrase endings as deviations from melody. When the development occurred, he made his musical points quickly and succinctly. I'd never heard him play this tightly.

The growth of Coltrane apparently continues unimpeded. Long may it do so.

Gene Lees

(Original liner notes from Ballads)

John Coltrane Quartet

Ballads

1. Say It (Over And Over Again) 4:18
2. You Don't Know What Love Is 5:15
3. Too Young To Go Steady 4:23
4. All Or Nothing At All 3:38
5. I Wish I Knew 4:54
6. What's New 3:47
7. It's Easy To Remember 2:49
8. Nancy (With The Laughing Face) 3:10

Please Note: In the interest of preserving the superb sound quality of these historic recordings, they have been preserved in their original, pristine state for maximum fidelity. Transferred from commercially released, analog reel-to-reel tapes (some of which are more than 50 years old), the recordings themselves can be subject to certain "artifacts" which are an inseparable part of the original analog recording process, such as tape "hiss" or other defects, and these may be audible on certain music tracks.

Because your CD or DVD-A was individually "burned" in order to realize superior sound quality to stamped, mass-produced versions, microscopic cosmetic blemishes may be visible. Please regard these tiny marks as evidence of the "human touch" in the care and individual attention that each and every HDTT disc receives during its very demanding manufacturing process.