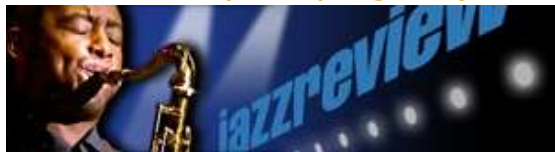


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## Featured Artist: Wadada Leo Smith's Golden Quartet

CD Title: Tabligh

Year: 2008

Record Label: Cuneiform

Style: Free Jazz / Avante Garde

**Musicians:** W.L. Smith (trumpet), Vijay Iyer (piano, Fender Rhodes, synthesizer), John Lindberg (bass), Shannon Jackson (drums)

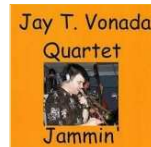
### Review:

Wadada Leo Smith is a trumpeter, composer, teacher, and theoretician best known for his association with Chicago's seminal Association For The Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM, for short). Since his emergence in the 1960s Smith's music has taken several routes of expression—minimalist low-volume chamber jazz, "out" forays with Anthony Braxton, Leroy Jenkins, and Larry Ochs' *What We Live*, and tributes to the electric music of Miles Davis in the company of guitar wizard Henry Kaiser. To a degree, all those seemingly disparate aspects come together on the latest from Smith's Golden Quartet, *Tabligh*.

Of Smith's many ventures, his Golden Quartet, with its trumpet/keys/bass/drums lineup, is nominally the most "straight-ahead." There's more emphasis on forward-rhythmic, somewhat turbulent ensemble playing evoking the late '60s Hancock/Williams period in Miles Davis' music where he was starting to "go electric." (Here, bassist John Lindberg is acoustic while Vijay Iyer plays acoustic and electric keys.) This disc, recorded live in 2005 (superb sonic quality, btw), recalls Miles circa *Miles In The Sky/In A Silent Way* albeit a little bit more free re: both soloing and ensemble playing. Smith chases the ghost of Davis and frequently catches it—his trumpet is crisp, mordantly biting, and riveting as that of Davis' best in the mid-'60s and early '70s, especially on "DeJohnette" (Jack, that is, who drummed w/ MD). Iyer is fluidly lyrical and restrained *a la* Paul Bley, using minimum notes for maximum effect. Much of this set has an elemental, long-ago blues-rooted "cry" to it that's very...poignant. The only (minor) downside to this mostly excellent platter is (Ronald) Shannon Jackson's drumming gets over-enthusiastic at times (but that's not without a certain charm) and the 24-minute title track feels like it meanders a bit. All in all, chalk up another winner for Smith, and I'd highly recommend *Tabligh* for open-minded jazz and adventurous rock fans wanting to expose themselves to "freer" music.

**Record Label Website:** <http://www.cuneiformrecords.com>

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