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Wadada Leo Smith's Golden Quartet

Tabligh
(Cuneiform)
US release date: 13 May 2008
UK release date: Available as import

by [Will Layman](#)

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Wadada Leo Smith is an early member of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians in Chicago and a longtime figure in the American jazz avant-garde. *Tabligh* is his third release with what he calls his "Golden Quartet", the first two from 2000 and 2002. This time around, Smith has a new trio behind him: the adventurous Vijay Iyer on piano and keyboards, John Lindberg on bass, and Shannon Jackson on drums. The music they make together is reminiscent of the earlier recordings in that it is lyrical and atmospheric, featuring both wide-open spaces and a heaping dose of pleasing melody.



AMAZON

There is no denying that the start of this disc is going to remind many listeners of the early electric experiments of Miles Davis. "Rosa Parks" combines plaintive trumpet cries with a grooving pulse colored mainly by electric piano—and it comes up like a gorgeous dawn just like "In a Silent Way". Even on the other tracks, where Iyer mainly plays acoustic, there is a Miles-ian tang. Smith quotes "I Fall in Love to Easily" at one point, just in case you weren't sure. In other respects, though, this music is more open and harmonically aggressive than Miles's work, with Iyer playing craggy, dissonant solos and offering the kind of accompaniment that suggests a secret meeting between Davis and Cecil Taylor circa 1973. Jackson playing rolling, explosive drums when he gets the chance and otherwise colors this exciting release with subtle care.



Wadada Leo Smith's Golden Quartet Live

RATING: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

— 25 August 2008

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