

The quartet session from 1963 is as much Stitt's album as Blakey's. Indeed, with its hastily constructed blues themes, busked standards and laidback feel, it resembles nothing so much as an after-hours blow. However, the sheer quality of the participants' contributions lifts it above Stitt's sets with more obscure rhythm sections and it's intriguing to hear Stitt and Blakey with Tyner, then one fourth of Coltrane's quartet. How the pianist responds to another pairing of saxophone and drum virtuosos is noteworthy and the imperturbable Davis is a rock throughout.

Highlight? Probably Stitt's demolition of *The Song Is You*, feeding raw energy from Art's drums. For his part Blakey plays superbly throughout both albums and, back at the top, it's great to have them available again in one place.

Simon Spillett

ALICE COLTRANE

HUNTINGTON ASHRAM MONASTERY + WORLD GALAXY

[*Huntington Ashram Monastery*] (1) *Huntington Ashram Monastery*; *Turiya*; *Paramahansa Lake*; (2) *Via Sivanandagar*; *IHS*; *Jaya Jaya Rama*; [*World Galaxy*] (3) *My Favorite Things*; *Galaxy Around Olodumare*; *Galaxy In Turiya*; *Galaxy In Satchidananda*; (4) *A Love Supreme* (76.43)

(1) Coltrane (hp); Ron Carter (b); Rashied Ali (d, pc). NYC, 14 May 1969. (2) as (1), except Coltrane (p). (3) Collective personnel: Coltrane (p, org, hp, tambura, pc,

CRITICS' CHOICE

The 10 CDs that received most requests from JJ's panel of reviewers this month

Albert Ayler	Love Cry/The Last Album	Impulse 06025 5334699
Alice Coltrane	Universal Consciousness/Lord Of Lords	Impulse 06025 5334726
Miles Davis	1986-1991 The Warner Years	Warner Music France 5249878472
Duke Ellington	Meets Coleman Hawkins/And John Coltrane	Impulse 06025 5334729
Stan Getz	Interpretations #2 + #1	Poll Winners PWR 27280
Arun Ghosh	Primal Odyssey	Camoci CAMOCIO02
John Handy	In The Vernacular	Fresh Sound FSR-CD 647
Les McCann	Plays The Truth	Fresh Sound FSR-CD 646
Frank Morgan	Reflections	Contemporary OJCCD-1046-2
Mary Lou Williams	A Keyboard History	Poll Winners PWR 27277

arr); Frank Lowe (ts, ss, pc); Reggie Workman (b); Ben Riley (d); Elayne Jones (timp); Leroy Jenkins (vn); 14-part string section. NYC, 15-16 November 1971. (4) as (3) plus Swami Satchidananda (v).

Impulse 06025 2780946

UNIVERSAL CONSCIOUSNESS + LORD OF LORDS

[*Universal Consciousness*] (2) *Universal Consciousness*; (1) *Battle At Armageddon*; (2) *Oh Allah*; *Hare Krishna*; (1) *Sita Ram*; *The Ankh Of Amen-Ra*; [*Lord Of Lords*] (3) *Andromeda's Suffering*; *Sri Rama Ohnedaruth*; *Excerpts From The Firebird*; *Lord Of Lords*; *Going Home* (78.53)

(1) Collective personnel: Coltrane (org, hp); Jimmy Garrison (b); Rashied Ali (d, wind chimes); Clifford Jarvis (d, bells, pc); Tulusi (tambura); NYC, 6 April, 14 May, 19 June 1971. (2) as (1), except Jack DeJohnette (d); John Blair, Leroy Jenkins, Julius Brand, Joan Kalisch (vn); Ornette Coleman (arr). (3) Coltrane (p, org, hp, timp, pc); Charlie Haden (b); Ben

Riley (d, pc); string section (11 vn, 6 vla, 7 clo). Los Angeles, 5-13 July 1972.

Impulse 06007 5334726

Between 1968 and 1972, Alice Coltrane recorded seven albums for Impulse, of which three of these reissues, *Universal Consciousness* excepted, are among the lesser known. Together they give us a good opportunity to revisit the work of a much-overlooked and maligned figure. Coltrane has had a largely poor press over the years, unfairly criticised for replacing McCoy Tyner in her husband John's great quartet, for overdubbing some Coltrane material with strings, for her overt though devout spirituality and, often, for just being an independent woman in jazz. But she was a musician and composer of stature, as these sets testify.

Huntington Ashram Monastery benefits from its quiet trio format, the shimmering harp arpeggios of the first three tracks well set against Carter's singing bass and Ali's gentle drumming. Her even-volume piano playing on the final three tracks delivers cascades of notes, establishing a mood rather than defining a melody.

World Galaxy is altogether heavier and overwrought, swamped as it is in swathes of cod-dramatic strings. Two obvious but misjudged nods to her husband's legacy: the Rodgers/Hammerstein favourite rendered meaningless by a glutinous organ and then drenched in sugary orchestration, *A Love Supreme* now given a new narration on love that might best have been left off. An acquired taste, this set, that rather confirms my aversion to large-scale string arrangements in jazz.

Universal Consciousness achieved some fame for the three tracks on which Ornette Coleman provided "transcriptions", which appears to mean arranging "the symphony of celestial strings" Coltrane refers

to in the sleeve notes. They prove effective when set against her waterfalls of harp notes and are far more integrated into each piece than on the previous set. Overall, the balance of musicians and strings, and the serenity of the performances, make this a largely successful outing.

Lord Of Lords continues in the same vein, enlivened by an arrangement of excerpts from Stravinsky's *Firebird*. While not to many people's tastes, it is good to have these four sets back in ready circulation.

Simon Adams

CHICK COREA/STEFANO BOLLANI

ORVIETO

Orvieto Improvisation No.1; *Retrato Em Branco E Presto*; *If I Should Lose You*; *Dordalice*; *Jitterbug Waltz*; *A Valsa Da Paula*; *Orvieto Improvisation No.2*; *Nardis*; *Estre Seu Olhar*; *Darn That Dream*; *Tirititran*; *Armando's Rhumba*; *Blues in F* (75.00)

Chick Corea (p); Stefano Bollani (p). Live at Umbria Jazz Winter, 30 December 2010.

ECM 277 9692

Thirty-one years separate Corea and Bollani in terms of age, but one of the joys of music is that things like this rarely matter. For his first new ECM recording in 27 years, Corea has teamed up with Bollani to produce a masterclass in improvisation, and overall you have to marvel at the results.

The material here went from playlist to performance without any rehearsals, the process being neatly summed up by Corea when he says: "The freely improvised segments were spontaneous and not at all prearranged. Orvieto was winter-cold. The experience was summer-warm."

Initially, there is a slightly tentative feel to the proceedings, both men

Stefano Bollani: every nuance exquisitely captured by ECM



Tim Dickeson