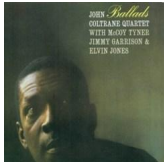


John Coltrane Quartet – Ballads (1963)

Written by bluesever

Monday, 24 March 2014 16:42 - Last Updated Tuesday, 16 December 2014 11:56

John Coltrane Quartet – Ballads (1963)



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 John Coltrane – tenor saxophone, soprano saxophone McCoy Tyner – piano Jimmy Garrison (#1-6, 8), Reggie Workman (#7) – bass Elvin Jones – drums

Throughout John Coltrane's discography there are a handful of decisive and controversial albums that split his listening camp into factions. Generally, these occur in his later-period works such as *Om* and *Ascension*, which push into some pretty heady blowing. As a contrast, *Ballads* is often criticized as too easy and as too much of a compromise between Coltrane and *Impulse!* (the two had just entered into the first year of label representation). Seen as an answer to critics who found his work complicated with too many notes and too thin a concept, *Ballads* has even been accused of being a record that Coltrane didn't want to make. These conspiracy theories (and there are more) really just get in the way of enjoying a perfectly fine album of Coltrane doing what he always did -- exploring new avenues and modes in an inexhaustible search for personal and artistic enlightenment. With *Ballads* he looks into the warmer side of things, a path he would take with both Johnny Hartman (on *John Coltrane & Johnny Hartman*) and with Duke Ellington (on *Duke Ellington and John Coltrane*). Here he lays out for McCoy Tyner mostly, and the results positively shimmer at times. He's not aggressive, and he's not outwardly. Instead he's introspective and at times even predictable, but that is precisely *Ballads'* draw. ---Sam Samuelson, Rovi

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