

## John Coltrane Quintet with Eric Dolphy (1961)

Written by bluesever

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1. *My Favorite Things* (Richard Rodgers, Oscar Hammerstein II) - 19:11
2. *Mr. P.C.* (John Coltrane) - 11:14
3. *Miles' Mode* (John Coltrane) - 10:35

### Personnel:

- John Coltrane - tenor & soprano saxophone
- Eric Dolphy - flute & alto saxophone
- McCoy Tyner - piano
- Jimmy Garrison - bass
- Elvin Jones – drums

Complete 1961 Copenhagen Concert

Most jazz aficionados know that in the early 60's, John Coltrane brought his good friend Eric Dolphy into the band, and together the two made some classic albums. The most famous of course being the Live at the Village Vanguard sessions. In addition, they also made *Ole* and *Africa/Brass*. As great as all albums are, and they are very good, Dolphy always plays in a supporting role. John Coltrane is always very much the main figure.

This album, a live recording from some club, is sort of the same, but also different. Dolphy plays a more central role, and seems more like an actual front line partner than before, in what essentially was the "classic quartet +1." There are three tracks, the stalwart *Favorite Things*, *Mr P.C.* (interesting to hear two horns on the head) and *Miles Mode* (or *Red Planet*.) These three tunes provide a great glimpse of the every-day workings of one of those most super-human jazz groups ever to play on this earth.

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Despite this invaluable opportunity, the album is by no means perfect, and by no means essential. Consider it more a major curiosity, rather than a major recording. On first listen it seems as if 'Trane is having an off-night (especially on Favorite Things.) Closer inspection reveals him to be exploring the free territory he began to broach at the Vanguard, and later post-Ascension. His usual technical prowess and furious energy throughout the horn is replaced by shrieks, groans and other words out of the free jazz bag...not nearly as engaging, but certainly as fascinating. Coltrane never rested on his laurels, and he certainly did not here...he is experimenting, exploring. The result is both compelling and unsettling at once.

Dolphy and Tyner are both revelations here. Tyner steals the show on Favorite Things with his brilliant transitions between hammered chords and shimmering one handed lines. Always the accompanist in the band, Tyner had to learn to make the most of what was given, and he certainly does that here. Dolphy's highlights are on Mr. PC (an astonishing solo creatively, energetically, and technically.) You can really hear him expound on Charlie Parker's language in a way no other altoist had ever done before, or since. His solo on Miles Mode is also particularly clever. Elvin Jones, of course, relishes the opportunity to back up two of the heaviest hitters in jazz...his playing is thunderous AND responsive. ---Matt Bailey, amazon.com

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