

Mahavishnu Orchestra - Birds Of Fire (1973)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Birds Of Fire*
2. *Miles Beyond*
3. *Celestial Terrestrial Commuters*
4. *Sapphire Bullets Of Pure Love*
5. *Thousand Island Park*
6. *Hope*
7. *One Word*
8. *Sanctuary*
9. *Open Country Joy*
10. *Resolution*

- John McLaughlin - guitar
- Jerry Goodman - violin
- Jan Hammer - piano
- Rick Laird - bass
- Billy Cobham – drums

Emboldened by the popularity of *Inner Mounting Flame* among rock audiences, the first Mahavishnu Orchestra set out to further define and refine its blistering jazz-rock direction in its second -- and, no thanks to internal feuding, last -- studio album. Although it has much of the screaming rock energy and sometimes exaggerated competitive frenzy of its predecessor, *Birds of Fire* is audibly more varied in texture, even more tightly organized, and thankfully more musical in content. A remarkable example of precisely choreographed, high-speed solo trading -- with John McLaughlin, Jerry Goodman, and Jan Hammer all of one mind, supported by Billy Cobham's machine-gun drumming and Rick Laird's dancing bass -- can be heard on the aptly named "One Word," and the title track is a defining moment of the group's nearly atonal fury. The band also takes time out for a brief bit of spaced-out electronic burbling and static called "Sapphire Bullets of Pure Love." Yet the most enticing pieces of music on the record are the

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gorgeous, almost pastoral opening and closing sections to "Open Country Joy," a relaxed, jocular bit of communal jamming that they ought to have pursued further. This album actually became a major crossover hit, rising to number 15 on the pop album charts, and it remains the key item in the first Mahavishnu Orchestra's slim discography. ---Richard S. Ginell, Rovi

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