

Notes for “A Love Supreme”

In 1957, after Miles Davis fired him on a gig for his inability to play because of heavy drug and alcohol use, John Coltrane experienced what he referred to as his “spiritual awakening.” He began meditating, praying, and practicing many hours a day.

In 1964, he took his quartet into the studio to record his spiritual declaration, a 33-minute, 4-part suite he titled: “A Love Supreme.” His pianist, McCoy Tyner, explained that the lights were turned low in the studio and that their chemistry, after years of playing together, was so powerful that they found their way through the piece in a single take. Coltrane did not like to rehearse; he urged the group to listen hard and create in the moment.

The simple motif, the foundation of the suite, appears throughout the piece; it is everywhere, says critic Louis Porter. And Coltrane plays it in all twelve keys. Both his paternal and maternal grandfathers were ministers in the Zion Black Methodist Church, and in 1957 Coltrane was ordained as a minister. From this moment, he claimed that ninety per cent of his playing was prayer.

“My music is the spiritual expression of what I am: my faith, my knowledge, my being.”

“My goals remain the same: uplifting people as I can to inspire them to realize more and more their capacity for living meaningful lives.”

“All praise to God. This album is a humble offering to Him in an attempt to say ‘Thank you, God’ ”

Coltrane studied Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and the Vedas. “God is sound; music is a devotional act” (Nada Brahma). “A commitment to meditation” (Intellectual school of Vedanta). “[A] search for a spiritual truth” (Bhagavad Gita). “I believe in all religions.”

Ohm expresses the oneness of all things; the unity of the divine—powerful expression of divine longing. Losing oneself in the musical performance is the highest form of prayer.

Jazz at St. Martin's featuring



Featuring John Coltrane's
'A Love Supreme'
performed on keyboard, percussion and bass

7 p.m., Saturday, August 10

St. Martin's Episcopal Church

5327 Lake Morey Rd. E., Fairlee, VT

Free Admission - Donations Welcome

PROGRAM

The Sonny Saul Trio has featured, over the last several years, Peter Concilio on bass, Tim Gilmore on drums and Sonny on piano, and presents the music of the great jazz composers and Sonny's original compositions. They perform once a month at Pleasant Street Books and have been fortunate to attract that rarity in jazz—a listening audience. The concerts are free and open to the public. Woodstock Community Television has recorded many of their sessions.

Sonny Saul grew up in Atlantic City, New Jersey, and in his twenties studied with Dennis Sandole, one of the great American jazz guitarists, composers, and music educator of the last century. After moving to Vermont in the mid-1980's with his growing family, he opened Pleasant Street Books in Woodstock, an antiquarian store that continues to thrive. He teaches music privately and practices regularly with friends for his "own amazement." He has composed hundreds of tunes.

Peter Concilio is a freelance bassist who performs in and around the Upper Valley. A recipient of a Lincoln Center teacher/artist grant and a grant from Connecticut's Falk Foundation for his work with aspiring young jazz musicians, he is the former artistic director of the Hartland Jazz Fest and member of Interplay Jazz and Arts. He continues to hone his craft, performing with Sonny Saul's Trio and Bob Merrill's Trio Tango Norte.

Tim Gilmore lives in Lebanon, NH, and teaches at Plymouth State University and for Interplay Jazz and Arts. He is an active clinician and has recorded extensively. Tim has worked with Tower of Power, Pete Seeger, Shawn Colvin, and has performed on PBS documentaries, an HBO mini-series, and the feature film: *Vermont Is for Lovers*. He has appeared at the Cape May Jazz Festival, the Shenandoah Valley Jazz Festival, the Blue Note in New York City, and Ronnie Scott's in London.

The Sonny Saul Trio

August 10, 2024

St. Martin's Church, Fairlee, Vermont

Sonny Saul, Piano; Tim Gilmore, Drums and Percussion;

Peter Concilio, Double Bass.

"Walk Spirit, Talk Spirit" (Tyner)

"A Love Supreme" (Coltrane)

Acknowledgement

Resolution

Pursuance

Psalm

Intermission

"Wise One" (Coltrane)

"Soul Brother" (Saul)

"Spiritual" (Coltrane)

Coltrane recorded "A Love Supreme" in 1964. It was a spiritual declaration. He claimed that most of his playing after that time was prayer.