

America: Critic's Review



Artist: [Wadada Leo Smith](#)

Release Date: May 19, 2009

Label: Tzadik

Styles: [Modern Free](#), [Avant-Garde Jazz](#)

Critics' Rating: ★★★★★ [read review](#)

Avg. User Rating: ☆☆☆☆☆ 0 ratings

Your Rating: ☆☆☆☆☆ [write a review](#)

Critic's Review:

Trumpeter [Wadada Leo Smith](#) is one of the most fascinating players in American avant-garde jazz. Perhaps only [Miles Davis](#) was more interested in exploring the spaces between notes -- and [Smith](#) has spent many years exploring [Davis'](#) electric music in [Yo Miles!](#), the group he co-leads with guitarist [Henry Kaiser](#). He's recorded in just about every conceivable setting, from the solo trumpet excursions heard on [Kabell Years: 1971-1979](#) to big bands, and his latest disc is, in a couple of different ways, another facet of his fascination with Miles Davis. He's partnered up with drummer [Jack DeJohnette](#), who played in [Davis'](#) band from 1969-1972 but who also backed the initial lineup of [Smith's Golden Quartet](#). And one of the compositions here, "Red Trumpet," seems to be named in tribute to [Davis'](#) famous horn, while the opening cut, "America, Pts. 1, 2, 3," quotes from [Davis'](#) solo on "Concierto de Aranjuez" from [Sketches of Spain](#). That's only part of the picture, of course. [Smith](#) and [DeJohnette](#) are highly individual voices, unique and immediately recognizable on their respective instruments and endlessly creative and inventive, and throughout this album they explore melody, rhythm, and pure sound in a symbiotic duet that's some of the best music either man has made. The austere stillness at the heart of [Smith's](#) music is anchored and emphasized by [DeJohnette's](#) powerful mastery of the drum kit, adding up to a record that deserves to be placed alongside [Don Cherry](#) and [Ed Blackwell's Mu](#) sessions in the avant-jazz pantheon. ~ Phil Freeman, All Music Guide