

Turtle Island Quartet

A Love Supreme: The Legacy Of John Coltrane

TELARC 80684

★★★

The Turtle Island Quartet doesn't give the appearance of slumming when taking on music outside the contemporary classical repertoire. The San Francisco Bay Area-based group, whose 1988 debut album included a vigorous take on Miles Davis' "Milestones," has dipped



into jazz, bluegrass, Latin and Indian music, and they've done so with little sense of self-consciousness. Founding violinist David Balakrishnan and his quartet mates sound like they came to their musical broadmindedness naturally.

The late Alice Coltrane offered kudos for the group's approach to her husband's music. His spirit is evoked, with a loping then swirling version of "Naima" that brings out all the poignancy and inherent beauty of the piece. The album opens with a tour de force "Moment's Notice," which starts with crisscrossing lines before the quartet members let loose with a series of improvised solos.

Another highlight is the torrid, contrapuntal reading of "Countdown."

The title suite is the disc's centerpiece, with a dark-hued "Acknowledgement" setting the stage and sounding the familiar rhythmic figure, "Resolution" expanding with a larger theme and the high-spirited "Pursuance" followed by the meditative "Psalm." An inventive redesign of Davis' "So What" closes the CD.

—Philip Booth

A Love Supreme: The Legacy Of John Coltrane: Moment's Notice; La Danse Du Bonheur; Model Trane; A Love Supreme Acknowledgment, Resolution, Pursuance, Psalm; 'Round Midnight; Countdown; My Favorite Things; Naima; Song To John; So What. (64:17)

Personnel: David Balakrishnan, violin, baritone violin; Evan Price, violin; Mads Tolling, viola; Mark Summer, cello.

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