

Joe Zawinul – Dialects (1986)

Written by bluesever

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1. *The Harvest* 2. *Waiting For The Rain* 3. *Zeebop* 4. *The Great Empire* [play](#) 5. *Carnavalito* 6. *6 A.M. / Walking On The Nile* 7. *Peace (Album Version)*

Joe Zawinul - keyboards

Joe Zawinul's 1986 *Dialects*, the keyboard legend's first solo album after 15 years with Weather Report, is worth revisiting. Featuring nothing but Zawinul on a virtual army of synthesizers with some occasional contributions from Bobby McFerrin on improvised vocalese and a three-part vocal choir, *Dialects* is at once an apt summation of the veteran Austrian keyboardist's career-long affinity for synthesizers and an interesting portent of the world-music direction his muse would soon lead him.

Although some of the drum-machine grooves here sound a bit dated now, *Dialects* is heady stuff from the opening "The Harvest", a journey into 1980s techno-funk topped by Zawinul's colourful array of synthesizers and McFerrin and the vocal choir's intriguing vocalisations, oriented more toward sonic effect than lyrical content. Other tracks like "Waiting For The Rain" and "6 AM/Walking On The Nile" more explicitly evoke the world-music sounds Zawinul was to explore with his own Zawinul Syndicate soon after he recorded this album, with Zawinul mimicking a variety of Brazilian and African indigenous instruments with his synths.

Although in some ways *Dialects* resembles the music Herbie Hancock was making in the 1980s—in particular Hancock's 1984 foray into world music/techno funk, *Sound System*—it's unmistakably the work of its creator, filled with the kind of soulful synthesizer work Zawinul had been creating with Weather Report since the early 1970s. ---Ezra Gale

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