

Alice Coltrane - Radha-Krsna Nama Sankirtana (1977)

Written by bluesever

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1 "Andromeda's Suffering" – 9.26 2 "Sri Rama Ohnedaruth" – 6.14 3 "Excerpts from The Firebird" – 5.42 [play](#) 4 "Lord of Lords" – 11.19 5 "Going Home" – 10.30 Personnel Alice Coltrane : harp, piano, organ, tympani, percussion Charlie Haden : bass Ben Riley : drums, percussion STRING ORCHESTRA - Murray Adler (concertmaster), Nathan Kaproff, Lou Klass, William Henderson, Ronald Folsom, Leonard Malarsky, Gordon Marron, Janice Gower, Gerald Vinci, Sidney Sharp, James Getzoff and Bernard Kundell - violins; Myra Kestenbaum, Rollice Dale, Leonard Selic, David Schwartz, Samuel Boghosian and Marilyn Baker - violas; Jesse Ehrlich, Jerry Kessler, Jan Kelly, Anne Goodman, Edgar Lustgarten, Ray Kelley and Raphael Kramer - cellos. Music arranged and conducted by Alice Coltrane

Radha-Krsna Nama Sankirtana was issued in the mid-'70s by Warner Bros. Forgoing jazz altogether, this set is a series of devotional songs from the Hare Krishna religion that Alice Coltrane practiced. Three of the tracks here are chants, with Coltrane backing a vocal chorus on Fender Rhodes and organ. They are memorable, catchy, and moving given the joy of the singers. The other two tracks here feature Coltrane's interpretations of Indian songs. On "Ganesha," she plays harp and is accompanied only by Sita Coltrane on tamboura. This is not jazz in any sense of the word, but it is engaging, utterly interesting music, particularly for Alice's juxtaposition of space against melody. "Om Nama Sivaya" is the album's closer, and at 19 minutes is over half of the disc's entire length. Here is where the great jazz musician shows her face. Playing Wurlitzer organ, Alice is backed only by John Coltrane Jr. on drums. She improvises against a traditional Indian mode and stretches it until it turns back on itself, breaks, moves into other modalities of harmonic invention, and rebuilds itself. It's driving, with a circular rhythm and head that reveals itself at odd junctures, and is full of great soloing. This track alone makes the set worth its purchase price. --- Thom Jurek, AMG

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