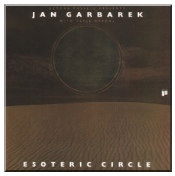
Jan Garbarek – Esoteric Circle (1969)



01. Traneflight - 2:53 play *02. Rabalder - 8:17 03. Esoteric Circle - 5:24 04. Vips - 5:41 05. Sas 644 - 7:49 06. Nefertite - 2:04* play *07. Gee - 1:10 08. Karin's Mode - 7:33 09. Breeze Ending - 3:40*
Personnel: - Jan Garbarek - tenor saxophone - Terje Rypdal - guitar - Arild Andersen - bass - Jon Christensen – drums

Jan Garbarek had studied with the great American composer George Russell, and had previously appeared on Russell's venture into jazz-rock, Electronic Sonata for Souls Loved By Nature. Whereas his teacher's usage of rock rhythms in an avant jazz context often came off as rather clunky, for Garbarek and his guitarist, Terje Rypdal, formerly a member of the popular Norwegian band the Vanguards, such a melding was more second nature. The Esoteric Circle, the first album by their band of the same name (hey, this was still the '60s after all), is a highly successful and enjoyable effort, one that can stand comfortably with work being done at that time by Tony Williams or John McLaughlin.

Garbarek's compositions range from deeply felt homages to Coltrane ("Traneflight" and "Nefertite") to rocking jams like "Rabalder," where Rypdal gets to showcase his considerable chops. In fact, some of these themes were used by Russell in his aforementioned work. Garbarek's own playing, here entirely on tenor, come largely out of Albert Ayler as well as Coltrane, and his general attack is much more raw and aggressive than the style for which he would eventually become more widely known through his recordings for ECM. Listeners who enjoy his first several albums for that label (from Afric Pepperbird to Witchi-Tai-To) will find much to savor here. ---Brian Olownick, allmusic.com

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