

Your review should be a minimum of 2 pages long, typewritten, and **thoroughly proofread**. Within your review, be certain to describe the music in terms of categories and musical techniques outlined in lectures (bass roles, drum roles, era, instruments, etc.) and the form of at least one piece on it (12-bar blues, 32-bar AABA, etc.) You should also list correct personnel, tune titles and other relevant information. Give a detailed account of your personal impressions of the music, both what you liked about the music and what you disliked about it and WHY.

Review of Three Quartets by Chick Corea

Personnel:

Chick Corea – piano; Michael Brecker – tenor saxophone

Eddie Gomez – bass; Steve Gadd – drum set

Recorded January, February 1981

Three Quartets was released after Corea had spent most of the 1970's working with Return To Forever, his fusion based electronic ensemble. In this album Corea was reinvestigating his acoustic jazz roots. The influence of Bill Evans is quite obvious, but so are Corea's own abilities as a drummer/percussionist and in the field of Latin Jazz. The sound of the Bill Evans Trio is made even more apparent by the presence of Eddie Gomez on acoustic bass, one of Evans's former bass players. This album was also recorded less than four months after the death of Evans, and the musicians here were likely remembering him as they recorded this album.

Some of the ways in which Evans' influence is felt are in the roles played by the bass and drum set. Eddie Gomez is not just a rhythm section player here. He is also a featured soloist, taking a solo on almost every tune. In addition, he often doubles the melody statements of either Brecker or Corea. Steve Gadd, the drummer, is also much more active than a traditional jazz drummer. There is even one moment during his solo in *Quartet 2, Part II* when Corea accompanies him (!!!). He also changes the sound of the group by using rhythms more commonly associated with rock and roll. This is not surprising considering Gadd's involvement with rock and roll. By the time this album was produced, Gadd had already recorded with Paul Simon, Steely Dan, Joe Cocker, Eric Clapton, Jim Croce and James Brown. Indeed, with the exception of Gomez, all the musicians had experience in playing rock, especially Gadd and Brecker.

Quartet #1 demonstrates both the standard method of improvising over a tune's supporting harmonic structure and the concept of modal improvisation. In Brecker's solo, he takes the modal approach (soloing over a single chord throughout, a la John Coltrane) instead of following the chord changes for the tune itself. In contrast to Brecker's modally based excursion, Eddie Gomez's solo is

played over the chord changes of the main tune of this piece, as is Chick Corea's. Corea's use of both of these improvisational approaches in a single tune is quite unusual, and one of the things that makes the album sound different than most other jazz albums.

Quartet #3 is based on the relationship between half-time and double-time. The tune and the solos all start with a slow to medium tempo, then change to a double-time feel halfway through. The return to the original tempo at the beginning of each chorus gives the impression of a half-time feel, so there is a continual shifting back and forth between the two tempi.

After the Coltrane-like modal sections of *Quartet 1*, it comes as no surprise that Part One of *Quartet 2* is dedicated to him. The other half of *Quartet 2* was written for Duke Ellington. Corea opens this section with a long unaccompanied solo on piano (Ellington's instrument), played very freely and without a steady tempo. This freedom of tempo extends into Brecker's first entrance, where the tenor player states his own version of Corea's melody. (Note that the bass and drums have yet to enter here.) We get our first signs of swing feel and a steady tempo where this melody ends and Eddie Gomez's solo begins. Gomez, Corea and Brecker then each play a solo in time over the harmony of the original tune, with Gadd adding a subtle commentary with brushes on the set. Near the close of Brecker's solo, the quartet makes a short return to the tempo-less feel of the beginning.

Quartet 2, Part II begins with Gadd alone, setting up a feel that is part rock, part jazz, and part drum corps. The melody is very straightforward and repetitive. The form is here as close as the *Quartets* get to AABA, but instead the form here is AABAAB'C. Each A & B section is eight bars long, but C is twelve bars long and functions as a coda. The solos (by Corea, Gomez, Brecker and finally Gadd) do not follow the form of the tune. Instead they are based on a simple eight bar chord progression that repeats throughout all the solos. Gadd's role in this series of solos is quite different from a typical drummer. His interplay with the other soloists is astonishing, and always makes the listener feel like he is playing a duet with whoever the soloist is. His own solo stands out, as he also follows the same form as the other soloists. This is easiest to hear when Corea plays the accompanying figures at the beginning and end of Gadd's solo. The melody gets stated one last time at the end of the tune, as is standard. From there the album takes a different turn, including four tunes that were recorded at the same time, but not released on the original record.

As stated above, none of the pieces entitled *Quartet* follow a traditional pattern of either AABA or a blues chorus. As a result, they sound much different from the other tunes on the album, *Folk Song* (AABC), *Hairy Canary* (blues), *Slippery When Wet* (a single A section) and *Confirmation* (AABA). Two of these four tunes are noteworthy for their different approaches. First, *Confirmation* reminds this writer of John Coltrane's and Elvin Jones' duet improvisations, as it is played by only Brecker and Gadd. *Slippery When Wet* brings to mind the mid-1960's quintet of Miles Davis. Two elements bring this comparison to mind. First, its improvisation around a repeated melody is reminiscent of Davis's album *Nefertiti*. That same album also features the second element, the constant improvisation within the rhythm section.