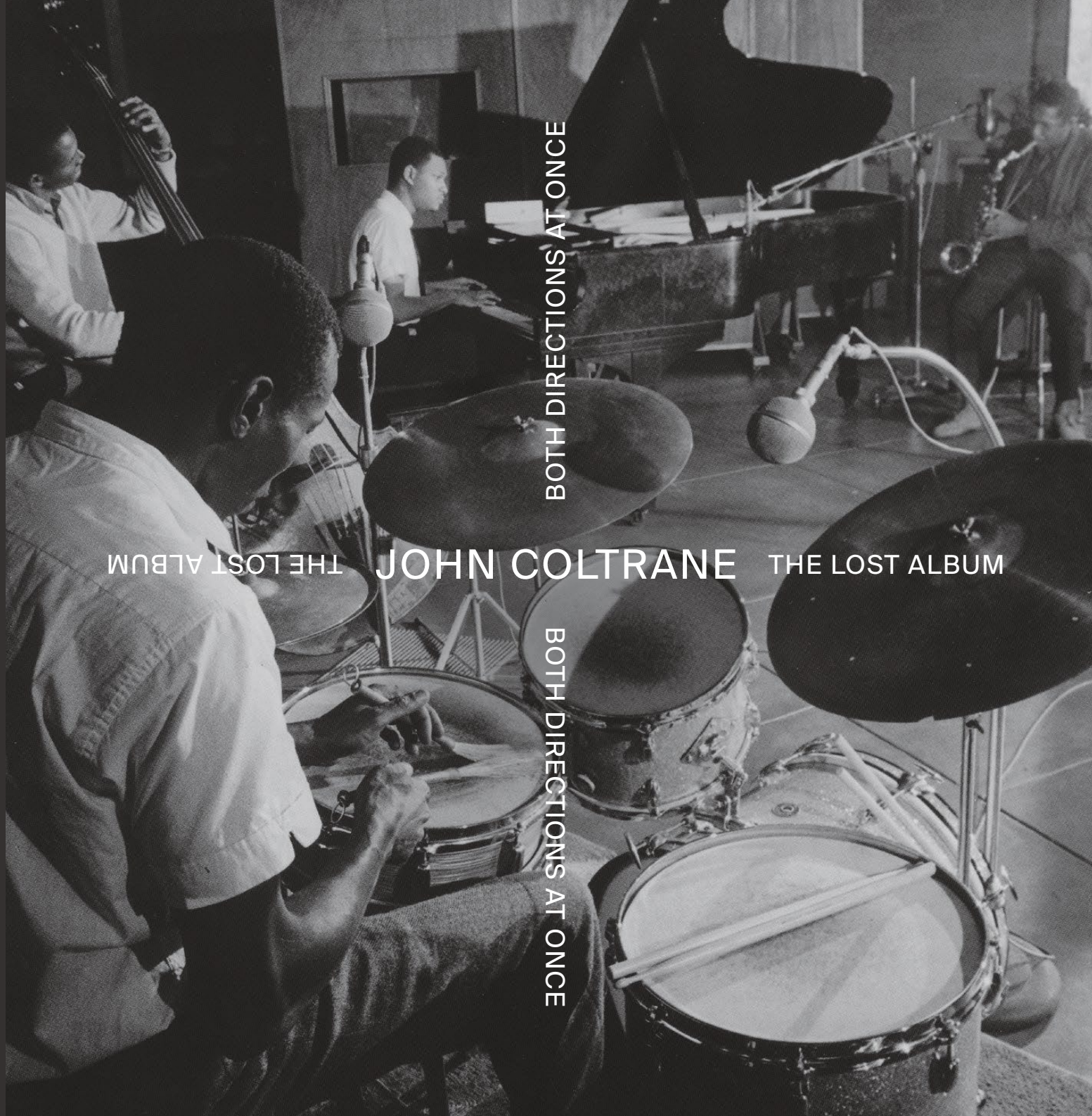




BOTH DIRECTIONS AT ONCE

THE LOST ALBUM JOHN COLTRANE THE LOST ALBUM

BOTH DIRECTIONS AT ONCE

THIS IS LIKE FINDING A NEW ROOM
IN THE GREAT PYRAMID.

— SONNY ROLLINS



There's no question. Any new music by John Coltrane now, fifty-one-plus years since his departure, merits immediate elation. *Exaltation*. Especially if this discovery is well-produced studio recordings shared publicly for the first time, as these are. In the same gesture, there's reason enough to hold back, to first ask the questions that must be asked. Any unreleased Coltrane music would demand it.



What kept these recordings under wraps for so long? "Lost"—well then, how and why? "Album"—really? As in a fully conceived sequence of tracks intended for release under one title? What do they sound like, and how do they fit into the Coltrane puzzle, his well-studied musical path?



With *Both Directions At Once: The Lost Album*, the answers lie in the context of the recording: the why, who, how, and particularly when of the session in which this music came to be. The answers also reside in the music itself—all stand-out performances from a day when John Coltrane was the captain of his career—a star headliner helming one of the most era-defining bands on the scene.

As ever with Coltrane, understanding begins with the timeline. These recordings were created in late winter of 1963—March 6th to be exact. At the time, Coltrane and the members of his Classic Quartet—McCoy Tyner, Jimmy Garrison, and Elvin Jones—were at their collective prime. Their music was fresh, with an in-your-face intensity that did not neatly abide by the standards of the tradition they came from. Their performances caused sweat and suspended rules of time and space. Together they summoned spirits, injecting the ecstatic message of the black church into the polite world of jazz: Sunday morning on a Saturday night.



© Joe Alper courtesy of Joe Alper Photo Collection LLC

1963 marked Coltrane's third year as a leader, his playing as influential as it was controversial, balancing raw emotion and ear-bending experimentation. Some regarded him sideways, labeling his music self-indulgent, "anti-jazz," or worse. Others hailed him as the flag-bearer of free jazz, especially a younger breed—the purveyors of the "New Thing"—who looked to Coltrane for inspiration, ideas, and fortitude to stand up in ways that the '60s are known for.

Even lightning rods must ground themselves with career matters; Coltrane was no exception. By '63, he was well aware of the demands brought on by popularity and his stature. His 1961 success with Atlantic Records, "My Favorite Things"—a radio and jukebox hit—had catapulted him into the company of jazz's top legends. Later that same year, he signed to Impulse Records and soon became their best-selling artist, a label leader with a favorable contract. "Coltrane Leads The Way," reads an Impulse ad from around that time.

For Coltrane in 1963, the recording studio (Impulse used his favorite, Rudy Van Gelder's vaulted, wood-and-masonry-block studio in Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey) was the place to both realize his commercial potential and its benefits, and to pursue his own ideas and satisfy his own creative needs. Pushing in both directions at once. It was about his relationship with his label, nightclubs and festivals, and the music business at large; Coltrane was an active participant in making it work.

"I think Impulse was interested in having what they might call a balanced sort of thing, a diverse sort of catalog, and I find nothing wrong with this myself," Coltrane said in 1966, looking back on the more commercially minded projects of 1962 and '63: the album *Ballads*. A collaboration with Duke Ellington. An album with a singer of his choosing. He had chosen Johnny Hartman, and the results endure in film soundtracks to this day. Coltrane added:

"These ballads that came out were definitely ones I felt at this time. I chose them...and Johnny Hartman—a man I had stuck up in my mind somewhere...I looked him up and did that album."

The March 6th, 1963 date of the recordings on *Both Directions At Once: The Lost Album* precedes the Johnny Hartman session by one day; both took place at Van Gelder's studio. That Coltrane was consciously straddling the accessible and adventurous shows on these tracks. In fact, this discovery reveals a number of creative balances at work, like developing original melodies while rethinking familiar standards. Like trying out some tunes first on tenor saxophone, then on soprano. Using older techniques—like the arpeggio-runs of his "sheets of sound"—while expanding his leaning on melodies with longer tones and a simpler, spiritually charged lyricism. To call the music from this session "pivotal" overlooks the fact Coltrane was ever on pivot, always pushing the pedal down while still pulling on older, tested ideas and devices.

During this period, Coltrane released albums that were less commercial, reflecting his own mind and musical ideas; they were also about balance: *Impressions* (issued in July '63) and *Live At Birdland* (April '64). Both had live tracks of intense, unleashed power, as well as studio recordings of standards and mood-setting moments of introspection. *Both Directions At Once* follows this same mix: well-chosen ballads and inner-focused, longer-toned performances, and—instead of live recordings—performances that suggest his onstage velocity.

Was this lost '63 session intended to create an album? It would seem so by the reasons above, and one other thing: the duration of the complete takes from March 6th totals to the appropriate timing for two sides of an LP record. Additionally, the tracks balance out evenly between Sides A and B.



© Jim Marshall Photography LLC





© Jim Marshall Photography LLC



TO MY EARS, IT WAS A KICKING-THE-TIRES KIND OF SESSION.

– RAVI COLTRANE

When John Coltrane and the quartet arrived at Van Gelder's studio that afternoon in 1963, they knew they had to record and run. They had a gig that evening in Manhattan, the last night of a two-week residency at the Birdland jazz club. Depending on traffic, the drive could require forty minutes to an hour to get there.



Everyone was busy that week—especially Van Gelder. That Monday, he recorded Tyner for Impulse in trio format for his third album as a leader—*Nights Of Ballads & Blues*. Late on Wednesday, after Coltrane, he engineered a Blue Note date with Hank Mobley that created music to be released on his albums *No Room For Squares* and *The Turnaround*. On Thursday, he oversaw Coltrane and the quartet joined for the first and only time by a singer. And on Friday, Van Gelder recorded a Prestige Records date, which became the album *Lucky Thompson Plays Jerome Kern And No More*.

Per Van Gelder's pocket schedule book, Bob Thiele ("BOB T") had first booked a five-hour session on March 6th for "Trane" from 2:00pm to 7:00pm, which was shifted to 1:00pm to 6:00pm, presumably to accommodate the Birdland set, even if they were the second band to play that night. (The first week of their run, Coltrane had shared the bill with Thelonious Monk; the second, he played opposite Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers.)

Like many jazz groups before and since, Coltrane's quartet took advantage of that extended engagement to work out new material for the studio date, to get familiar with the music—but not too much—and then capture it in the studio. By 1963, Coltrane knew what he was doing onstage and in the studio.

"Man, every time I heard him he was nothing but confidence," says saxophonist Wayne Shorter, who was playing in the Jazz Messengers at the time.

"There was always something new coming with him and the new thing then was the soprano...and he was playing "Nature Boy" and stuff like that. I was back in the kitchen—at Birdland you didn't go out in the audience to hear another group but you could hear it through the walls. You could hear everybody through the walls, and then it was our time to go on..."

"Nature Boy"—the parable song written by Los Angeles mystic eden ahbez and originally recorded by Nat Cole in 1948—had not been in Coltrane's regular set-list before the Birdland run. "Villia" was

also under consideration, a melody borrowed from the Franz Lehár operetta *The Merry Widow*, and popularized in the modern era by clarinetist Artie Shaw's big band in 1939 (Paul Whiteman brought it into the dance music arena even earlier, recording it in 1934).

Notably, Coltrane was 13 when "Vilia" was on the radio, and 22 when "Nature Boy" hit—the age span when maximum melodic retention typically occurs for most people. According to many who knew him, Coltrane had an uncanny ability to recall songs he heard in his youth.

Coltrane brought both melodies into the studio in '63, determined to catch the fresh, first take of each. He approached "Vilia" with a lighthearted affect, first on tenor and then—more convincingly—on soprano saxophone. (Until the digital era, the complete soprano take of "Vilia" was the sole track from the session to be released, included on the third of Impulse's three-volume, *The Definitive Jazz Scene* series in 1965.)

Intriguingly, Coltrane approached "Nature Boy" only once on this date—as a trio with Tyner laying out. For the saxophonist, playing in a piano-less context and freeing up the harmonic plane was nothing new. He was certainly aware of how Ornette Coleman and Sonny Rollins had each embraced this approach, had done it many times himself in live situations (famously on "Chasin' The Trane" in 1961) and spoken about it in multiple interviews, explaining it was something he

did, "only on occasion." On this occasion, Coltrane has Tyner sit out a number of times—on the first part of the first take of "One Up, One Down," on the third take of "Impressions," during certain saxophone improvisations—and on "Nature Boy."

Coltrane's brief, solo-less reading of "Nature Boy" leans heavily on the song's minor-key mood. He employs the tenor to both accent the sober message in its lyric, and to draw out and embellish the melody at will. The filigree serves as his sermon, as Jones's fills add uplift and agreement, and Garrison's ostinato anchors with somber ambience. Coltrane whispers his last notes and pulls away, letting the rhythm step forward as bass and drums maintain the pulse for another half-minute. (Whatever Coltrane felt of this singular take, he was compelled to return to "Nature Boy" two years later, guiding it down a deeper, more avant-garde path for the album *John Coltrane Quartet Plays* in February 1965, keeping Tyner, adding a second bassist—Art Davis—and trying it out using various time signatures.)

Coltrane also cultivated a few, unnamed originals during his Birdland engagement that he brought into the session: an angular, minor-key blues he played on soprano (number 11383 in Impulse's master numbering system). A lighter, lyrical piece with an unusual structure that he also favored on soprano (11386). Then there's a burner on tenor (11387), fueled by the charged, harmony-stacking approach he had developed in the late '50s. Now titled "One Up, One Down" as its melodic line utilizes the same

kind of augmented triad as another Coltrane original ("One Down, One Up" from 1965), this number is the sole original from this session that has been heard before—on a bootleg of a Birdland performance by the quartet on February 23rd.

Coltrane's own handwriting on one of the tape boxes from the session suggests he was considering at least two titles—"Triangles" and "Sun Ship"—for these nameless compositions, though it's unclear which was for which. (In 1971, the latter title would be applied to a posthumously released album culled from one of the Classic Quartet's last sessions.)

On the same tape box, Coltrane wrote "So What," referring to the tune he built on the same harmonic foundation as the Miles Davis tune—and which he would later title "Impressions" (11385). By March '63, he had been performing it for more than two years. McCoy Tyner calls it a good example of a Coltrane "signature piece...that's why he kept playing certain tunes, because they were good specimens for growth." Coltrane's multiple versions of "Impressions" vary widely in feel yet all show how deeply he had absorbed the tune's shape and contours. Take by take, they also reveal how completely he could rethink his improvisations: playing more in or out, or with Tyner laying out as he does on Take 3.

Coltrane's development of "Impressions" over time is a rabbit-hole in itself and the subject of intense study for many (biographer Lewis Porter's "Deep Dive" into the tune—available online—offers a fascinating win-

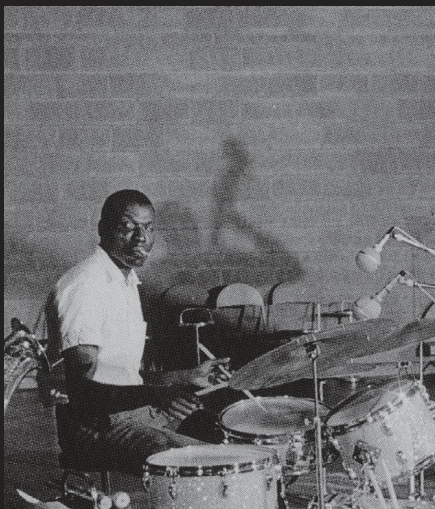
dow into how Coltrane could craft a unique original from disparate sources in a Frankenstein fashion). For a tune that was a permanent part of Coltrane's setlists over the years ("My Favorite Things" is perhaps the only tune he performed more often), it's intriguing to note that Coltrane only attempted "Impressions" in the studio a few times: under the title "Excerpt" in two 1962 Impulse sessions for the album *Coltrane*, and these four takes, adding a final chapter to the story. By all indications this marked the last time he tried to record the tune. When the album *Impressions* appeared in July 1963, officially baptizing the original with its now well-known name, Coltrane chose a Village Vanguard performance of the tune from December '61 as the version to be released.

By 1963, Coltrane's experience in the studio had schooled him to trust the energy of a first or second take. On this session, almost all tunes merit one or two complete takes; the only exceptions were "Impressions" (with four complete versions) and "11386" (with three). As such, the multiple takes of the latter point to a determined effort to get another tune down in releasable form, while still trying out new ideas: the last take, for example, recasts a major-mode section into one with a brooding, minor feel. It's a wonder this one never received a title, let alone a release date, given the apparent determination. It's a smart, snappy melody with a giddy groove: a good match for the soprano's pensiveness as played by Coltrane, elevated by Jones's chattering, Latin accents, and spirited solos by Tyner and Garrison.

The final track on the date—simply titled “Slow Blues”—is another session standout, a more relaxed way into the “Chasin’ The Trane” idea: mixing the warm familiarity of the blues with pinched-throat, avant-garde blowing. While Tyner laid out on that historic 1961 performance, this particular blues is as much his as Coltrane’s. His piano improvisation is witty and wistful; two choruses in there is a tempo shift that reminds how intertwined the roots of R&B and modern jazz have always been. Coltrane’s return for the last three minutes is a revelation: his solo adeptly leaps from openness to density, never losing the rich flavor or reassuring form of the blues.



Between the takes, *Both Directions At Once* includes studio chatter, a peek into an Impulse date: Bob Thiele’s Eastern twang slating the takes, sometimes getting the number wrong, and Coltrane rarely uttering a word—that’s him confirming the first take of “11383” as an original. Still, there’s enough here to hint at the focused concentration of a typical Coltrane session, where, as Tyner recalls, the group tried to recreate the ambience they knew best. “When we got into the studio, we liked to capture the live effect, just like we were playing live somewhere.”



© Jim Marshall Photography LLC



As night fell that Wednesday evening in 1963, so the session ended. Van Gelder placed the master tapes into their boxes, and shelved them in his studio with recordings from other Impulse sessions. As he also created LP lacquer masters from the recordings he had engineered, many masters were stored at his studio. Coltrane packed his horn and left for Birdland with the rest of the quartet; they’d all be back the next day for the session with Johnny Hartman.



What happened to these recordings after that point is partly conjecture based on the habits of Coltrane and of his label. We know that these tracks were never edited, mixed or mastered into an album—no catalogue number was assigned, no cover art created—no paperwork reflecting a plan to release the music. Someone or something held it back.

We also know that by '63 Coltrane was repeatedly dismayed when the first labels he was contracted to—namely Prestige and Atlantic—stockpiled his earlier sessions and released them years later as his star climbed, causing confusion among jazz fans and critics. By the early '60s, there were Coltrane recordings everywhere; albums featuring his music from the late '50s and early '60s were issued as if new, competing with the Impulse titles that contained his most recent advancements.

According to Reggie Workman—bassist in Coltrane's band during most of 1961—"John mentioned to me that he wanted to put into his contract that [his recordings] had to come out within a certain amount of time. He'd say, 'Don't bring out those records that I did today ten years from now and my fans are going to be asking me to play that. In my mind, I'm many light years ahead.' But I think he could ask the people at Impulse and they'd listen to him."

Listen they did—or at least Bob Thiele did. If Coltrane felt the music recorded on March 6th, 1963 was soon superseded—in quality or relevance—by subsequent recordings, Thiele would have heeded a request from his star artist. Such was their relationship. "Once I was at Impulse, the best thing that happened to me was meeting Coltrane and working with him," Thiele once told music writer Bob Palmer. "It wasn't anything he told me, he wasn't trying to educate me, it was...*listening*."

In fact, Thiele himself admitted complicity in working against record company standards of the day—like conspiring to record Coltrane even if it did not necessarily yield a marketable product. "The budget was certainly way above the norm for any company making jazz records," Thiele said in a 1995 interview, the year before he died. "I was always over budget with Coltrane."

"I was finally told, 'You can't just keep recording this guy. We'll never get these albums out.' Thank God, I did it. I used to record eventually at night rather than announce, 'Hey, today I'm going to be recording John Coltrane.' What I preferred was to come into the office the next day and say, 'Gee, we did a great album with John Coltrane last night'...*Fait accompli*."

As for the master tapes themselves, in multiple interviews, Van Gelder described how, soon after John Coltrane died in July 1967, any and all master reels remaining in his possession were retrieved by Impulse. Not long after, the entire record company—staff, offices, materials—relocated to Los Angeles, and the master recordings ended up in a storage facility. In the early '70s, as part of a general cost-cutting effort at ABC, reel after precious reel was discarded to reduce storage fees. One tape copy was retained of each existing catalogue item. Apparently, if the music had never been released, out went the tape.

That tapes containing this 1963 session nonetheless survived is due to another privilege Coltrane enjoyed while at Impulse. After each session, he received 7" tape reels to take home and review—music that had been recorded in monaural format simultaneously with the studio masters. Some of these reels Coltrane kept himself; some he chose to share with his first wife Naima, with whom he kept in touch even after they separated.

The performances on *Both Directions At Once* come from tapes which remained in the hands of Naima's family, and are still in remarkable shape for a plastic-and-oxide ribbon more than fifty-five years old. Were it not for Coltrane's mono audition reels, this music would indeed have been lost forever.

THEY'RE LIKE SENTENCES SO THERE'S NO MORE 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4.

IT'S LIKE THERE'S A PULSE, AND...

YOU KNIT A SWEATER. WHATEVER YOU DO, DON'T THINK ABOUT MUSIC.

– Wayne Shorter, describing his musical philosophy in the late 1950s.

This album draws its title from a statement John Coltrane made to saxophonist Wayne Shorter during their woodshedding sessions in the late '50s, "...about starting a sentence in the middle, and then going to the beginning and the end of it at the same time...both directions at once." At the time, many improvisers of their generation were born under the sign of bebop and the focus was on jazz at the nuts-and-bolts level, on harmonic relationships and tonal centers. Language was the go-to metaphor.

"Another thing we'd do when I was at his house is hit the piano keys with the forearm, from fist to elbow," adds Shorter. "Play a cluster of notes. I'd do it for him and he'd do it for me and he would say, 'See if you can find a story in there!'"

A mere four years later, when these recordings were made, Coltrane's ideas on music had expanded in ways and at a rate that challenged the most forward-thinking of music fans. What was originally a comment about the granular level of music-making, by 1963 described a more general, balanced mindset. What Coltrane was looking to express began to push the music in divergent directions simultaneously: programmatically, conceptually, in its sound and purpose.

A few months after Coltrane recorded the tracks on *Both Directions At Once* he began to consciously connect his music to events in the world around him with tunes like "Alabama" and "Up 'Gainst The Wall." Roughly a year after that, the spiritual,

message-giving priority in Coltrane's music would take hold. In these recordings—"Nature Boy," "Impressions," the untitled originals—one can sense the seed of that directive starting to bud, pushing itself to the surface.

"I think what they were actually playing was alternate ways of living, a better way to live," says Shorter of this music. "Later, that was what [Coltrane] did on *A Love Supreme, Ascension*. Let's have a better life—in fact, there is going to be one."

Ashley Kahn, March 2018

CD1

1. UNTITLED ORIGINAL 11383 (TAKE 1) (5:41)
WRITTEN BY JOHN COLTRANE
JOWCOL MUSIC LLC

2. NATURE BOY (3:24)
WRITTEN BY EDEN AHBEZ
GERALDINE E. JANOWIAK DBA GOLDEN WORLD (ASCAP)

3. UNTITLED ORIGINAL 11386 (TAKE 1) (8:43)
WRITTEN BY JOHN COLTRANE
JOWCOL MUSIC LLC

4. VILIA (TAKE 3) (5:32)
WRITTEN BY FRANZ LEHÁR
ELEVEN EAST CORPORATION (ASCAP)

5. IMPRESSIONS (TAKE 3) (4:36)
WRITTEN BY JOHN COLTRANE
JOWCOL MUSIC LLC

6. SLOW BLUES (11:28)
WRITTEN BY JOHN COLTRANE
JOWCOL MUSIC LLC

7. ONE UP, ONE DOWN (TAKE 1) (8:01)
WRITTEN BY JOHN COLTRANE
JOWCOL MUSIC LLC

CD2
1. VILIA (TAKE 5) (4:37)
WRITTEN BY FRANZ LEHÁR
ELEVEN EAST CORPORATION (ASCAP)

2. IMPRESSIONS (TAKE 1) (4:06)
WRITTEN BY JOHN COLTRANE
JOWCOL MUSIC LLC

3. IMPRESSIONS (TAKE 2) (4:37)
WRITTEN BY JOHN COLTRANE
JOWCOL MUSIC LLC

4. IMPRESSIONS (TAKE 4) (3:40)
WRITTEN BY JOHN COLTRANE
JOWCOL MUSIC LLC

5. UNTITLED ORIGINAL 11386 (TAKE 2) (8:41)
WRITTEN BY JOHN COLTRANE
JOWCOL MUSIC LLC

6. UNTITLED ORIGINAL 11386 (TAKE 5) (8:23)
WRITTEN BY JOHN COLTRANE
JOWCOL MUSIC LLC

7. ONE UP, ONE DOWN (TAKE 6) (7:17)
WRITTEN BY JOHN COLTRANE
JOWCOL MUSIC LLC

JOHN COLTRANE:
TENOR SAXOPHONE,
SOPRANO SAXOPHONE

MCCOY TYNER:
PIANO

JIMMY GARRISON:
BASS

ELVIN JONES:
DRUMS

ALL TRACKS PREVIOUSLY UNRELEASED, EXCEPT CD2, TRACK 01, PREVIOUSLY ISSUED ON *THE DEFINITIVE JAZZ SCENE, VOLUME 3* AND CD VERSIONS OF *LIVE AT BIRDLAND*.

RECORDED BY RUDY VAN GELDER AT VAN GELDER STUDIOS, ENGLEWOOD CLIFFS, NJ
RECORDED: MARCH 6TH, 1963
MASTERED BY KEVIN REEVES AT UNIVERSAL MUSIC MASTERING, NEW YORK, NY
ORIGINAL RECORDING PRODUCED BY BOB THIELE

BOTH DIRECTIONS AT ONCE: THE LOST ALBUM PRODUCED BY KEN DRUKER AND RAVI COLTRANE
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER FOR UME: HARRY WEINGER
A&R: KEN DRUKER
A&R ADMINISTRATION: EVELYN MORGAN
PRODUCTION MANAGER: ERIC NEUSER
RELEASE COORDINATION: JULIE JOHANTGEN
PACKAGE COORDINATION: NATALIE WEBER
LEGAL CLEARANCE FOR UME: ATHENA RAPIS
MARKETING MANAGER: OLIVER SCHRAGE
CREATIVE DIRECTION: JOSH CHEUSE
DESIGN: OSK STUDIO

COVER PHOTO: © JIM MARSHALL PHOTOGRAPHY LLC

ORIGINAL ¼" ANALOG MONO TAPES WERE USED FOR ALL TRACKS. MINOR TAPE ANOMALIES THAT MAY BE HEARD ARE A BY-PRODUCT OF THE HISTORICAL NATURE OF THIS MATERIAL.

SPECIAL THANKS TO:
ANTONIA ANDREWS, MICHELE ANTHONY, DANNY BENNETT, ZAID BETTIS, JAMAIL COLTRANE, MICHAEL CUSCUNA, YASUHIRO FUJIOKA, LUCIAN GRAINGE, TERRI HINTE, BARRY KERNFELD, JAMIE KRENTS, DR. LEWIS PORTER, BRUCE RESNIKOFF, SONNY ROLLINS, WAYNE SHORTER, MAUREEN SICKLER, HADLEY SPANIER, MCCOY TYNER, AISHA TYNER, DEEN TYNER, AMIR TYNER, REGGIE WORKMAN

WWW.VERVELABELGROUP.COM
WWW.UNIVERSALMUSICENTERPRISES.COM

