

WHAT THE PRESS HAS SAID ABOUT

Wadada Leo Smith ***Ten Freedom Summers***

One of NPR's Top 50 Albums of 2012

Included on over 70 Best of 2012 lists

International Musician of the Year — Musica Jazz Magazine

Musician of the Year — New York City Jazz Record

Musician of the Year and Album of the Year — 2012 El Intruso Creative Music Critics Poll

"*Ten Freedom Summers* was as striking a display of his expansive vision and his vitality. He still plays trumpet as he always has: with little vibrato and a tone that can be either boldly declarative or soft to the point of breaking... Mr. Smith had made his own statement through instrumental music. And it sounded complete."
— **Larry Blumenfeld, *Wall Street Journal***

"Five stars. Although there are many outstanding recordings in Smith's canon, it's hard to avoid calling this his masterpiece."
— **Barry Witherden, *BBC Music Magazine***

"A staggering achievement, with the dramatic sweep of the trumpeter's writing... It merits comparison to Coltrane's *A Love Supreme* in sobriety and reach."
— **Francis Davis, *Rhapsody Jazz Critics Poll***

"Whether you put these dates on your "jazz" or "classical" calendar—or even if you just place it on your "mind-bending art" calendar—consider Smith's Roulette performances among the most important concerts in New York this season."
— **Seth Colter Walls, *Village Voice***

"Mississippi-born jazz composer Wadada Leo Smith has mastered the art of omission, splicing his most dazzling phrases with dramatic pauses and mysterious silences... During a spectacular piece titled 'September 11, 2001,' Iyer's sparkling Rhodes work was countered by Lindberg's liquid bass lines... All together, the quartet played with an elegance that transcended the chaos of that day."
— **Chris Richards, *The Washington Post***

"For all the noble efforts made over the decades to effectively merge the worlds of jazz and classical music, most often the fruits of the labors remain stuck in the 'noble effort' category. But there are blissful exceptions, a list to which we can now add Wadada Leo Smith's ambitious five-hour, civil rights-surveying *Ten Freedom Summers*... His magnum opus ... Hope, anger, abstraction and grand aesthetic ambition come to bear in Smith's inspirational work, bolstered by the charge of the new."
— **Josef Woodard, *Los Angeles Times***

"There are ambitious works, and then there is trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith's *Ten Freedom Summers*... The sound is never less than widescreen. You won't find any vamp sessions or alternating solos in Smith's interpretation of jazz — like the history he's reprising, it only moves forward."
— **Otis Hart, *NPR***

"Five stars. Enormously rewarding, like mid-period Miles Davis playing Ligeti."
— **Phil Johnson, *The Independent UK***

"The hour-long excerpt that Smith was allowed to play at the Pritzker proved more gripping, concise and ingeniously shaped than the recording of "Ten Freedom Summers" suggests. A master at uttering profound truths with bracing dissonance, stripped-down musical gestures and striking contrasts of instrumental color, Smith presided over music of searing expressive power. Even if you didn't know that "Ten Freedom Summers" grapples with our nation's struggles over civil rights, this music conveyed tremendous visceral and intellectual impact."
— **Howard Reich, *Chicago Tribune***

"Four stars. Smith's playing runs the gamut from slow-bubbling daubs to stark, keening lines, and its force belies the old saw that age is unkind to brass players' chops."
— **Bill Meyer, *DownBeat***

"It is, without a doubt, his most monumental [work]. It is a piece of music rich in emotional depth, nuance and historical scope.... The music was highly emotive, often somber and elegiac..."
— **Aaron Leitko, *Washington Post***

"Four stars. Smith's brash and plangent trumpet and freewheeling improv from his Golden Quintet merges with a written score delivered by the nine-member Southwest Chamber Music ensemble. Full of melodrama, pathos and hope, it is the veteran trumpeter's defining statement."
— **Mike Hobart, *Financial Times***

"Seamlessly blends jazz, classical and improvisational styles... Compositions ripple with dramatic melodies, shimmering textures, galvanizing rhythms and empathic interplay. This isn't some musty, historical song cycle, but vital and surprising music."
— **Jeff Jackson, *Jazziz***

"Four stars. That mystically inclined trumpeter and composer Wadada Leo Smith has finally produced his magnum opus, a four-hour meditation on defining moments in the Civil Rights movement."
— **Ivan Hewett, *Daily Telegraph***

"If one had to answer quickly what work will matter most this year in American music (as if matters of mattering arose with some regularity), Wadada Leo Smith's *Ten Freedom Summers* would trip readily to the tongue."
— **Stuart Broomer, *Point of Departure***

"This may as well turn out to be the most challenging (and emotionally rewarding) release of 2012."
— **Bret Saunders, *Denver Post***

“The music of *Ten Freedom Summers* suite is stirringly beautiful in its own right... Manages to pay tribute to the Civil Rights Movement in a wholly original, wordless way that also holds up as an astounding aesthetic achievement.” — **Michael Casper, *Oxford American***

“His magnum opus, as historically important as it is sonically rich, harrowing, cinematic and eclectic, anchored in the blues and gospel and taking flight pretty much everywhere else. This Cuneiform release gets the top spot for 2012.” — **Alan Young, *Lucid Culture***

“The crowning achievement of trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith’s distinguished career to date.” — **John Sharpe, *All About Jazz***

“A monumental achievement... With anthemic, roiling sounds designed to celebrate and embody the once-inextricable link between protest and music.” — **Peter Margasak, *Chicago Reader***

“Spanning centuries of black history and a range of fierce jazz styles, Wadada Leo Smith’s *Ten Freedom Summers* is a monumental evocation of America’s Civil Rights movement.” — **Bill Shoemaker, *The Wire***

“*Ten Freedom Summers* truly deserves to be described as an epic work: 19 pieces across four CDs, encompassing more than four hours of music, composed by Wadada Leo Smith over the last 34 years. If it weren’t for the fact that the prolific 70-year-old trumpeter shows absolutely no sign of slowing down, it would be tempting to call it the work of a lifetime.” — **Daniel Spicer, *BBC***

“He’s a cultural icon and one of the few remaining still delivering African American key jazz players and composers from the generation who came of age in the sixties.” — **Max Reinhardt, *Late Junction, BBC Radio 3***

“Four stars. It might seem glib to say that a serious subject such as the Civil Rights movement... requires serious music. But this deeply moving and artistically ambitious work gives credence to the statement.” — **Kevin Le Gendre, *Jazzwise***

“10/10. More than anything, *Freedom* is about sound: the tangible, physically beautiful sounds of Smith’s imperative trumpet and of different instruments in combination, testing their own limits... Like visiting a sacred site or reading Tolstoy or Proust, listening to *Freedom* is an emotional and intellectual luxury, a chance to commune with greatness.” — **Josh Langhoff, *Pop Matters***

“Smith’s own playing on the trumpet is always inspiring. His sound throughout this cycle is intense and raw, imaginative and poetic, sensitive and passionate... *Ten Freedom Summers* is an artistic peak in Smith’s already impressive musical career. It is also a milestone statement about the societal role of an artist and the arts.” — **Eyal Hareuveni, *All About Jazz***

“From the exploitative roots of slavery to the emancipatory advocacy of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Smith’s music resonates with the suffering and the dreams of a better life that embodied the decade of 1954 to 1964 that is the subject of this powerful compendium of compositions.” — **Glen Hall, *Exclaim***

“Smith’s music can be complex, even thorny – but he is a deeply and thoughtfully spiritual man and his music is also heartfelt, positive and even passionate.” — **Bill Tilland, *Foxy Digitalis***

“An important moment in jazz history... This album transcends any consideration of where it might stand by comparison to other albums released this year. Instead, consider this as a jazz counterpart to Claude Lanzmann’s *Shoah*, a chronicle with artistic merit equal to its inestimable historical value.” — **Alan Young, *Lucid Culture***

“*Ten Freedom Summers* is a release you truly have to hear for yourself to believe. If you love the body of jazz and classical music, there is without a doubt that you need this in your collection. Easily the most important socially slanted album of the last 30 years that represents an aspect of history... This is what American music is all about.” — **Erik Otis, *Sound Colour Vibration***

“The work of a lifetime by one of jazz’s true visionaries, a kaleidoscopic, spiritually charged opus inspired by the struggle for African-American freedom and equality before the law. Triumphant and mournful, visceral and philosophical, searching, scathing and relentlessly humane, Smith’s music embraces the turbulent era’s milestones while celebrating the civil rights movement’s heroes and martyrs.” — **Bruce Gallanter, *Downtown Music Gallery***

“*Ten Freedom Summers* is your basic masterpiece... An emotionally overdriven, ever-changing tapestry full of rewarding digressions.” — **Richard Gehr, *Relix***

“Smith blends skilled writing, including passages for a nine-piece ensemble of strings and winds. The tempers of the work range from tumult in ‘Dred Scott’ to gauzy reflection in ‘Fannie Lou Hamer and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, 1964.’ Titles and themes aside, the music, as music, is potent and satisfying.” — **Doug Ramsey, *Riffides***

“*Ten Freedom Summers* is his magnum opus; it belongs in jazz’s canonical lexicon with Duke Ellington’s *Black Brown & Beige* and Max Roach’s *Freedom Now Suite*.” — **Thom Jurek, *All Music Guide***

“Trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith ended his magnum opus *Ten Freedom Summers* with a soundbite from Martin Luther King’s prophetic ‘I’ve Been To the Mountaintop’ speech, but the five hours of music... were anything but derivative... Smith affirmed that the battle for civil liberty was an essentially positive experience for humanity, but his writing suggested a starker legacy.” — **Michael Jackson, *DownBeat***

“No matter how one approaches and absorbs *Ten Freedom Summers*, as musician, artist, historian, sociologist, activist, or born of a particular ethnicity, the crux of this music, albeit of epic proportions, is simple. Eloquently explained by Smith, true freedom is not found or discovered because of fortune; it is earned through the persistent quality of the hard work of those who struggle to make themselves heard... The music, of course, forever memorable.” — **Lyn Horton, *Jazz Times***

“Smith’s grandest effort yet, a broad canvas dealing with the Civil Rights movement, but in poeticized musical terms, and for both jazz and ‘classical’ forces... He has managed the feat, idealistically and brilliantly.” — **Santa Barbara Independent**

“Through all the music’s fits and oscillations, the compositional aptitude of Leo Smith resulted in a powerful statement of historically oriented but forward-thinking music that left a lasting impression.” — **Luke Stewart, *CapitalBop***