

Beautiful United Harmony Happening

JOHN TCHICAI

featuring
DON CHERRY



JOHN TCHICAI FEATURING DON CHERRY & SAHIB SHIHAB Beautiful United Harmony Happening / The Education Of An Amphibian

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FORMALIBERA

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DESCRIPTION

Alga Marghen/Formalibera present the first of a series of released documenting the work of Danish composer and multi-instrumentalist **John Tchicai**. This new LP features two previously unpublished recordings, "Beautiful United Harmony Happening" with **Don Cherry** and "Education Of An Amphibian" with **Sahib Shihab**. Tchicai returned to his native Denmark in July 1966 after spending a remarkable four years in New York City. In that short span, he helped redefine and expand the relationship between soloing, collective improvisation, and composition in small free jazz ensembles such as the **New York Art Quartet**, the **New York Contemporary Five**, and on albums such as *New York Eye and Ear Control* with **Albert Ayler** and **John Coltrane's** *Ascension*. It certainly counts as one of the most fertile periods in any artist's career. Yet when he returned to Europe, Tchicai turned his attention primarily (although not exclusively) to large ensemble music. The breakthroughs made in New York were not lost, but transferred to a large group context, opening up further avenues of exploration. "The Education of an Amphibian" by the **John Tchicai Octet** represents a first try at "Komponist Udøver Ensemble," or "Composing Improvisers Orchestra," an approach that further blurred boundaries between improvisation and composition. Recorded in October 1966, the piece presents Tchicai as composer and guiding presence; an organizer of sounds; and an explorer of a widening musical vocabulary drawn from contemporary classical and African influences. "Beautiful United Harmony Happening" is something different – an opportunity to embrace new modes of interdisciplinary performance. From the beginning of his return to Denmark, Tchicai sought out not only musicians, but artists in all artforms and began to organize happenings. Although rarely noted, ideas linked to Fluxus, performance art, and happenings were a large influence of Tchicai's thinking at this time. All these related movements sought to blur or erase boundaries between media and set up juxtapositions between styles and artforms that disrupted received ideas of "high" and "low" art. Participation by non-artists introduced elements that challenged ideas about virtuosity and legitimate expression. Random elements were embraced, and non-Western music and concepts were welcome. This performance, heard here in an excerpt from the full two-hour performance, is very much in this vein. It is one of the last performances involving members of Cadentia Nova Danica, but they are only one component (and hardly the focus) of an ensemble that included a five-member chorus of disciples of the **Swami Narayananda** (Tchicai lived at the yogi's ashram and had organized the choir himself), the **Diane Black Dance Theatre**, and trumpeter Don Cherry. Includes insert.

TRACKLISTING

- A1. Beautiful United Harmony Happening (featuring **Don Cherry**)
B1. The Education Of An Amphibian (featuring **Sahib Shihab**)

HIGHLIGHTS

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- Includes insert.

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