

July 8th Show at Alva's Showroom

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Caleb Quaye and The Faculty are Beyond Cool
By B. Noel Barr, The Music Writer Dude

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Over the years I've witnessed a lot of live performances and have seen magic made on stage when everyone playing are on point. When a group of musicians get to this point in their performance an unspoken bond emerges between the band members, and between the band and its audience. You're almost afraid to acknowledge this in fear of jinxing the whole affair. It is a slippery intangible thing, that you know only when it happens, but you just can't put it into words. When Caleb Quaye and The Faculty performed at Alva's last Friday on July 9th, they danced with the unseen as if it were with their music. All present were elated for having been there that night, and we were grateful.

Quaye's (Sir Elton's original guitarist) and his band's performance just was mind blowing to say the least. This is jazz/rock fusion at it's best, it is where Return to Forever and the Mahavishnu Orchestra left off. Live or in the studio, Caleb Quaye and The Faculty is a band that rises to the highest expectations.

It was also a pleasure just to meet this artist. I thought way back in the 70s that he was one of the greatest guitar players on the planet. He is a team player and never over shadows his then boss Elton John. The Faculty has a leader who gives individual band member's the latitude to stretch as musician's. The band is made of Pee Wee Hill on bass, Charles Williams on piano, Doug Mathews on drums, and of course Caleb Quaye, on guitar.

In listening to Quaye, his tone on his guitar, I do not believe he has changed since his days with Elton John. He had a modest effects set up, playing through a small fender amp. The house mix at Alva's is fantastic. It doesn't matter where in the room you sit, the sound is always good. This group was in the best room in L.A., playing the best fusion music I have ever heard. Caleb Quaye and The Faculty are all having a ball playing together. The energy level is so high and the band is filled with so much joy, you cannot help but have a natural high listening to them.

The group played five covers, including: Jimmy Smiths, "Organ Grinder Swing"; Led Zeppelin's, "Black Dog"; Wayne Shorter's, "Mahjong"; Eddie Harris's, "Freedom Jazz Dance": and Cannonball Adderly's, "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy." Each of these songs fit the style of this group reinventing these tunes in a new and different way. Caleb Quaye and the Faculty really found new interpretations of "Black Dog" and "Freedom Jazz Dance."

The rest of the two sets were filled out with songs from the group's CD, "Out Of the Blue." The songs preformed as well as the ones on the CD are inspired. This is a formidable band playing (excuse me Caleb) balls to the walls jazz fusion. It is spirited, playful and powerful music that any blues, jazz, smooth jazz or classic rock fan is going to enjoy. The "Out Of the Blue" CD is a smooth jazz record and is a bit tamer than the live show, but a worthy collection to own nonetheless. All ten songs from the CD were brilliantly played. It is pointless for me to describe. You just had to have been there. The band is returning to Alva's in August. A date has yet to be set, so check out www.alva's.com and go to showroom calendar.

You can't help but fall in love with this guy. He is very nice and gracious, especially from someone like me who says stuff like, "Dude I love your solo on the song, "Madman Across the Water" from the Tumbleweed Connection, the extended CD

version. I have played this to my kids as an example of great musicianship.”

The man just laughed and thanked me. We shook hands and laughed a lot. I did an interview with Tito Jackson just recently and he is a very nice person, though he did not have to put up with my rabid fan disease that comes out every now and then as it did the other night with Caleb. If you want to hear Caleb and his band play, the group will be playing in Hollywood next Friday night, July 16, or you can get the CD “ Out Of The Blue” at www.Reverbnation. Go see a great band and a living legend work. He is the best guitarist you probably never have heard of.

Look for an interview next month.