

Bio information: **HENRY KAISER & WADADA LEO SMITH: YO MILES!**
Title: **SKY GARDEN** (Cuneiform Rune 191/192)

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Among the giants enthroned in jazz's pantheon, no one made as big, as broad, as bad-boy brazen of an impact on popular music in many manifestations – jazz, rock and improvisation – as **Miles Davis**. For over 50 years – half of the entire 20th Century! – he dominated jazz as a relentless, tireless innovator, repeatedly reinventing his own music as well as the genre itself. At the same time, he pioneered new routes for rock. As Mitch Myers best expresses in *Alternative Press*: “His influence went far beyond “the birth of the cool,” modal improvisation and bebop; he also pioneered the entire fusion era that anticipated much of today's acid jazz, ambient music and hip hop.” The innovations Davis made in both jazz and rock spawned immediate followers in his time, and continue to infuse and energize the music of today.

During the period c.1969-75, Davis also blazed new trails in improvisation. In recordings such as *Agharta*, *Ife*, *Panagea*, *Dark Magus*, *Big Fun*, and *On the Corner*, Miles laid out a new direction for music that fused composition and improvisation. But despite the fact that for years he steadfastly pointed towards new “Directions in Music” (as printed on his album covers at the time), Miles' road to new improv remained unexplored for nearly 3 decades. Even during the revival that began in the 1990s, when both “classic” and “electric” Miles were reissued, reappraised, reappreciated, and reinterpreted by new followers “... only one band has had the courage to throw itself full bore into the thorniest Davis era, the mid-'70s years when he created a dark, dangerous, haunting, ecstatically wondrous body of music that no one has ever attempted to duplicate.” (*San Francisco Chronicle*). That band is **Yo Miles!**, a San Francisco-based project piloted by two of the most prominent and adventurous explorers in creative music, avant rock guitarist **Henry Kaiser** and avant jazz trumpeter **Wadada Leo Smith**.

Yo Miles! was formed in 1998 to explore, expound and expand on Davis' mid-70s electric music. Avant rock guitarist, improviser and sonic explorer **Henry Kaiser** had wanted to do a project devoted to mid-70s Miles since the early 1990s, but it did not come to fruition until he recruited avant jazz trumpeter, improviser and composer **Wadada Leo Smith** as main collaborator. The two assembled an evolving all-star cast that “capture[d] the renegade spirit of Miles' most notorious band” (*Jazz Times*) and included **Michael Manring**, **Nels Cline**, **John Medeski**, **Freddie Roulette**, **Elliot Sharp**, **Lukas Ligeti**, and the **Rova Saxophone Quartet**. In January 1998, they created a 2-CD live studio recording called *Yo Miles!*, that was released by Shanachie to widespread critical acclaim. As *Jazz Central Station* raved:

“Awash in funky bass throbs, raging guitars, seething keyboards and relentless percussion, this glorious evocation of Miles' heavy-groove electronic period of the 1970s is Kaiser and Smith's remaking of Miles' music not from the outside, but from as deep inside as anyone has ever gone. While obviously based on Miles' groove-riff-beat framework, the album also arrives at Miles' music by taking the same creative roots he took 25 years ago....”

Yo Miles! was created as a project to revive and experiment with Davis' underlying system for performing and creating new music, live on the corner, and not as a tribute band that dealt with Miles' music on a more superficial level, doing faithful cover versions of Davis tunes. As Kaiser explained to Derk Richardson in a 1999 *San Francisco Bay Guardian* interview:

“...Miles developed such a beautiful system for making music... from 1972-'73 to 1975, or '71 to '75, depending on how you define it. Then nobody else really did it again. These pieces that Miles played in the 1973 to 1975 period weren't tunes really, they were composed of tiny thematic fragments, which usually Miles would state, an ostinato bass line that Michael Henderson would play, and a harmonic climate or environment. The tempos could change and different songs could be superimposed on top of each other. Do you remember what Miles used to put on some of his records during that period? It said 'Directions in Music by Miles Davis.' Miles was telling us what he was doing. ...no one followed that. ...nonlinear system, and consequently, that system didn't remain in fusion. ... The music is not what it appears to be on the surface ... when you see most people doing music influenced by Miles's electric period, they're doing the same thing that the Mahavishnu Orchestra and Chick Corea did – they're going for the textures, feelings, and colors.... But they're not looking at the logic, and we just happen to do that. The logic is harder to grasp, only because there has not been much other music operating by that logic.” (*SF Bay Guardian* 10/21/99)

Following the 1998 Shanachie release, Kaiser and Smith's **Yo Miles!** project performed several concerts on the West Coast. In keeping with the spirit of Miles' early 70s bands, and to ensure that their improvisations would be fresh and resonate with new discoveries, they varied their all-star lineups for each show. In Kaiser's words: “Miles found this new door that nobody had been through. Every night he'd go through this door and find different things. And no one's really been going through that door ever since. ...we're gonna get up there and go through that door and we're going to find something...” (*SFBGuardian*). **Yo Miles!** was the surprise hit at the 1999 **San Francisco Jazz Festival**, and performed at the **Filmore East** in 2000.

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For *Sky Garden*, Yo Miles!'s 2nd recording and 1st release on Cuneiform, Kaiser and Smith have again assembled an all-star cast culled from both the jazz and rock communities. The lineup here includes **Smith** on trumpet; **Kaiser**, **Mike Keneally** and **Chris Muir** on electric guitars; **Michael Manring** on bass; **Steve Smith** on drums; **Karl Perazzo** on percussion; **Greg Osby** (alto) and **John Thecae** (tenor and soprano) on saxophones; and **Tom Coster** on percussion. It also features a number of special guests, including **Zakir Hussain** on tabla, **Dave Creamer** on guitar, and the **ROVA Sax Quartet**. The group's studio performance at The Site was recorded live, directly to a stereo DSD (Direct Stream Digital) recorder, in a manner comparable to how Davis recorded live to analogue tape. The result is a set of two hybrid SACDs (Super Audio CDs, a new technology for enhanced audio quality) playable in either an SACD player – which best approximates the experience of Yo Miles!'s music being created live, in the room with the listener – or a standard CD player.

In *Sky Garden*, Kaiser and Smith joyously lead the listener along a path less traveled, following directions in music that Davis laid out decades before. Containing 2 1/2 hours of music, the recording features nearly equal parts of Davis' improvised compositions, and works composed by Smith and the Yo Miles! project. The music mixes pieces propelled by the rhythms and vamps of Miles' electric grooves with others infused by the mystery and spaciousness of Davis' darkest, most atmospheric works. Featuring riveting improvisations and inspired compositions recorded with the superior sound quality of SACD, *Sky Garden* conveys an unprecedented sense of immediacy. Indeed, the listener is taken on a breathtaking ride while Kaiser, Smith and their all-star cast create new music in real time. Reviving Davis' spirit from the inside out, *Sky Garden* is an essential work for fans of Davis and of jazz, as well as for those interested in new routes for (and the new roots of) improvisation and creative music in any genre.

A native of California, **Henry Kaiser** is recognized globally as one of the most creative and innovative guitarists, improvisers and producers in rock and world music today. Best known for his work with such well-known musicians as **Herbie Hancock** and **Jerry Garcia** of the **Grateful Dead**, he has collaborated with countless artists, recorded on over 150 releases, and performed around the world. As an improviser, he has recorded with numerous artists, including **Jim O'Rourke** and **Derek Bailey**, as well as solo. 1999, Cuneiform released *Friends & Enemies*, a 2-CD collection of two decades of his improv collaborations with **Fred Frith**. Cuneiform also released *Lemon Fish Tweezer* (1992), a 20 year retrospective of Kaiser's solo guitar improvisations. Critic Bill Meyer aptly summarized Kaiser as: "A true explorer, he really does take the guitar where no man has taken it before." In a 1992 interview in *The Washington Times*, Kaiser stated that "For me, music's about....trying to find new things - new to me and new to the audience, and trying to put them out there in front of people." To expose new and original voices in contemporary acoustic guitar, Kaiser curated a compilation called *156 Strings* (2002), released on Cuneiform. He has also traveled to record, perform with, and expose the public to the music of far-away lands, recording in such disparate places as Burma and Norway. The recording project he did in Madagascar with **David Lindley**, released as *A World Out of Time* on the Shanachie label, received a **Grammy** nomination and numbers as one of the most successful world music releases of all times. With the Yo Miles! project, Kaiser illuminates a long-ignored yet highly significant segment of Davis' oeuvre, transforming it into a beacon for future music.

One of the most original and important voices in American jazz, **Wadada Leo Smith** is a trumpet player, multi-instrumentalist, composer, improviser, educator and music theorist/writer. A Mississippi native whose first musical experience was in marching and blues bands, Smith has released more than 25 albums under his own name and/or bands on ECM, Moers, Black Saint and other labels, including numerous releases on his own **Kabell** label in the '70s-'80s and on **Tzadik** in the '90s. In addition to his own works, he has worked and recorded with numerous other artists, including **Muhai Richard Abrams**, **Carla Bley**, **Anthony Braxton**, **Marion Brown**, **Jeb Bishop**, **Leroy Jenkins**, **Cecil Taylor**, **Don Cherry**, and **Anthony Davis**, who called Smith "one of the unsung heroes of American music." Smith moved to Chicago in the 1960s, where he was a founding member of AACM and played in the **Creative Construction Company**. In the '70s, he moved to Connecticut, where he founded a label and a band, **New Delta Ahkri** (Smith, **Oliver Lake**, **Wes Brown**, **Henry Threadgill**, **Anthony Davis**). Smith has published books on his music theories and won numerous grants and awards as a composer (Meet the Composer, NEA, etc). His compositions have been performed by numerous contemporary music ensembles, including the Kronos Quartet and AACM. Smith taught at several colleges (U. of New Haven, Bard College, Woodstock's Creative Music Studio) in the Northeast prior to moving to California in 1993, as the first person to assume the Dizzy Gillespie Chair at CalArts (California Institute of the Arts). Currently, Smith, leads CalArts' African American Improvisational Music program, within Jazz Studies.

With Yo Miles!, Smith explores and expands Davis' system for creating new music. In doing so, he reveals not only the power of Davis' early '70s music, but the power of his own genius. As the *San Francisco Chronicle* noted:

"Smith is the revelation of the group. He has always been a masterful, if somewhat quiescent, player, but on the CD and onstage at the Fillmore, he let loose trumpet outbursts that were staggering in both conception and technique. He did Davis proud. "Wadada is the guy who makes this possible," Kaiser says. "He has such a strong sound. He can go up there and put it out and actually withstand the comparison" to Davis." (David Rubien, "Channeling Davis' Wondrous Spirit", *San Francisco Chronicle*, 2/27/2000)

“On *Yo Miles!*, Henry Kaiser and Wadada Smith pay high tribute to the prince of darkness with a double-disc chock-full of interpretations from Davis’ most eclectic (and electric) period of musical creativity. The original Davis performances from the 70s revealed a wild, improvisational spirit and a substantial debt to psychedelic soul mongers like Sly Stone and Jimi Hendrix... A wide-open, sprawling affair, *Yo Miles!* Provides about 160 minutes of free-flowing fusion. Smith’s wah-wah trumpet playing is particularly faithful to the Miles style and Kaiser’s electric guitar blazes brightly on demand...The second disc is especially adventurous, as the mysteries of Davis’ improvisational psychedelic-funk-rock-jazz unfold again before your very ears.”
–Mitch Myers, *Alternative Press*, Dec. 1998

“through these 160 minutes of intensive, free-blowing music is at once fascinating and exhausting – emotionally and physically. Take disc two’s opening track, “Calypso Frelimo,” for instance – 26 minutes of a pulsing, churning, slithering rhythmic undercurrent performed by a bunch of percussion and synthesizer players on top of which Smith’s trumpet and Kaiser’s various guitars create the damndest display of electric sounds most listeners have ever heard. ...Kaiser’s myriad guitar sounds play all over both of these discs, sometimes wailing atop the ensemble’s commotion, often weaving through that commotion and at other times becoming (via electronic gadgetry) a fluid, flute-like, solo lead. ...What Kaiser and Smith have produced on these two discs validates Davis’ role as a progressive, revolutionary player and inspirational spirit on a jazz scene that was increasingly stagnant.” –Philip Elwood, *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, Feb. 6, 1999

“Today, with jazz-rock hot again, groove jazz drawing young crowds into hip clubs, and the f-word (read: fusion) open for debate without knee-jerk reaction, the Davis era of wah-wah trumpet and synthesizers has taken on new meaning. Three decades after its birth, plugged-in Miles is definitely in the air with... trumpeter Wadada Smith and guitarist Henry Kaiser’s two-CD tribute *Yo! Miles* (Shanachie). Conclusion? Electric Miles still kicks ass....Kaiser writes....“Our idea is to make new creative recordings [built] on Miles’ legacy. We don’t emulate or copy Miles. We expand on his ideas with our personal voices.”
–D.O., *DownBeat* July 1998

“And now another one for the posthumous, electric Miles files: *Yo Miles!* (Shanachie), the emphatic exclamation point of which speaks of the sheer joy and in-yo-faceness of the project. At the heart of this tribute album are the ambi-conceptual guitarist Henry Kaiser and that too-rarely-heard trumpeter, Wadada Leo Smith...Playing music from the 1973-75 period, as well as a Smith original, the sum sonic effect is ethereal in a bold, edgy way – similar to the spirit and letter of the original music... To hear Smith tell it, “Our intention was to do the same music Miles did, but to give it a new twist from where we stand today.”...the electric Miles model was much freer and more-improvised than it was often given credit for, a fact that the players on *Yo Miles!* celebrate. “This material,” Smith notes, “had more improvising than any of his music up until then. The length of the bass line is one or two bars long, but the rest of it was hours of music, improvised on top.” –Josef Woodard, *Jazziz*, Dec. 1998

“Davis’s biographer Ian Carr describes this electronic stew of trumpet stabs, shrieks and wails over scrabbling guitars and percussion as “essentially collective music with multiple rhythms and textures”, and the band assembled by trumpeter Leo Smith and guitarist Henry Kaiser for this double 160-minute album, like its model, positively boils and seethes with tightly controlled energy. ...electric Miles looks set to become increasingly influential on contemporary jazz.”
–Chris Parker, *Times*, London, Oct 9, 1998

“Avant-gardists Kaiser on Guitar and Smith on trumpet brilliantly reinterpret the music of Miles Davis’ early-’70s electric band with an all-star lineup of fellow free-thinkers.” –CJ, *Bass Player*, March 1999

“...enormous energy and emotional exhilaration of these two eighty-minute CDs. Because avant-garde trumpet giant Wadada Leo Smith shares Kaiser’s passion for this music, and because they marshaled a brilliant core band and all-star posse of guests on reeds, keyboards, guitars, and percussion *Yo Miles!* not only vindicates the radical innovations of the late trumpeter but erupts with fresh arrangements and improvisations, proving the timeless and expansive nature of the Davis genius.” –*Express* (San Francisco)

“...Kaiser and Smith gather in around 20 cohorts – from Geraldine Fibber Nels Cline to ROVA sax quartet – and sprawl out slightly less than 180 minutes of free funk. So don’t just remember the sounds – burn the air with them.” –*Rocket* (Seattle, WA), Nov. 4, 1998

“*Yo Miles!*, featuring a group led by guitarist Henry Kaiser and trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith, captures the rawness and the unruly sprawl of the original stuff. With 2 1/2 hours stretched over the two CDs, the Kaiser-Smith band is able to replicate the epic trance element so essential to Miles’ fusion. Smith is a revelation here, adopting an appropriate aggressive stance. And Kaiser and fellow guitarist Nels Cline are scathing in protracted cuts like “Themes from Jack Johnson”, and “Calypso Frelimo”. 4 stars” –*Stereo Review*, Sept, 1998

“...while both guitarist Henry Kaiser and trumpeter Ishmael Wadada Leo Smith have been associated with music that is considerably more “outside” than Davis’ ’70s electric period... they formed the Yo Miles Band as a way to re-explore their own improvisational roots. Using key themes, as well as familiar rhythms and phrases of Miles’ electric ensembles, Kaiser and company expand upon Davis’ early lessons with a few of their own impressions. ... Davis surrounded himself with the most creative, cutting edge musicians of the time...as Kaiser and Smith have assembled a versatile cast of ’90s players.....while there may never be a time to challenge the power of Davis’ original versions, the 34-minute version of “Themes from Jack Johnson” here may be the most formidable, with well-planned, cohesive musical

transitions and longer, more declarative soloing from Smith than the initial soundtrack from nearly 30 years ago was able to accomplish.” – Virginia Reed, *Focus*, #117, Jan 21-Feb 3

This stunning 2-CD set of Miles Davis’s material by trumpeter Ishmael Wadada Leo Smith and guitarist/ producer Henry Kaiser transcends the “tribute” genre and genuinely honors the spirit of innovation that characterized Miles’ entire creative career. Utilizing themes, compositions, and vamps from Miles’ electric fusion period, roughly speaking, 1969 to 1975, Smith and Kaiser have created two lengthy suites that honor Miles in the best possible way...The playing is razor-sharp and innovative...the arrangements and improvisations are brilliant, and the production, which utilizes the new HDCD format absolutely superior. A landmark recording that Miles must be smiling down on.” –Todd De Groff, *Victory Review*, v.23, #12,m Dec 1998

“Kaiser, Smith and Co. are such curious and adventuresome musicians that there is barely a dull moment on the two discs. Smith, who takes care of trumpet scores, is wonderful, at one paying homage to Davis and throwing in signature trills that show he’s certainly not afraid to put his own mark on the music. And as expected, the guitar work on this set is breathtaking. With Kaiser often criss-crossing and building on top of the considerable talents of Smith and Cline, *Yo Miles!* offers up some of the year’s best jazz/funk guitar work. 4 stars. – *Palm Beach Post*, Sept. 25, 1998

“Guitarist Kaiser (who put Malagasy music on the map with his Madagascar recordings) and trumpeter Smith (with roots in the AACM) ride the crest of the Miles Davis electric-music renaissance with 160 minutes of roiling jazz funk inspired by *On the Corner*, *Big Fun*, *Agharta*, *Panagea*, and *Dark Magus*. An energetic core band, churning molten rhythms, rises to the Davis challenge and explodes when guest horn players add thrilling solos.–*Fi Magazine*, March 1999

“To call this stuff exploratory is about as succinct as calling the Grateful Dead a rock band! These discs actually contain 160 minutes of mind-bending music that transcends musical barriers... The textures and timbres created in these discs are quite magical and the musical empathy between these musicians more than does justice to the genius of Davis’ music. Those into serious music that’s steeped in improvisation will find plenty to interest them in this sophisticated and daring disc. Highly recommended.” –Mick Skidmore, *Relix*, Dec. 1998

“This vamp-based, free-jamming music hasn’t been covered much, largely because its essence is so ephemeral, the music’s themes and “compositions” often little more than tow-note bass riffs or changes in tempo. On two 80-minute suites, Kaiser, Smith and a well-rehearsed band...explore a dozen or so themes in a loose, freewheeling manner that adheres to Davis’ precepts but lets individual instrumental voices float to the surface. This is an ambitious project, rewarding for Davis novices, Kaiser fans (the guitarist launches some wild characteristically careening solos), and Miles devotees.” –*Guitar*, Nov. 1998

“Awash in funky bass throbs, raging guitars, seething keyboards and relentless percussion, this glorious evocation of Miles’ heavy-groove electronic period of the 1970s is Kaiser and Smith’s remaking of Miles’ music not from the outside, but from as deep *inside* as anyone has ever gone. While obviously based on Miles’ groove-riff-beat framework, the album also arrives at Miles’ music by taking the same creative roots he took 25 years ago.

...replied Kaiser. “We wanted to point at the way he did it. ...The music Miles did during that period, when he labeled the tunes on his record, they weren’t really *tunes*, they were different way of thinking about music... During his live performances and in the way he worked in the studio, he wasn’t thinking about tunes.” *Yo Miles!* assumes Davis’ mission to largely ignore European musical sensibilities in favor of open-ended themes and dense, sometimes droning, timbres. The project’s sense of discovery is further highlighted by Kaiser’s decision to hire musicians evenly divided between those well acquainted with the originals and those who’d never heard them before. – Drew Wheeler, *Jazz Central Station*, 9/18/98

“Between 1973 and 1975 Miles Davis created a mind-expanding, booty-shaking electric blend of jazz and funk. In *Yo Miles!*, innovative guitarist and producer Henry Kaiser joins forces with pioneering improvisers/ trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith to pay homage to Davis’s adventurous electric explorations.”

–*CMJ New Music Report*, Sept 7, 1998

“Hats off to one of the more adventurous tributes yet to Miles Davis. With *Yo Miles!*, guitarist Henry Kaiser and trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith have teamed up to create a challenging sonic tapestry dedicated to the late trumpeter’s...1972-’75 electric period. ...There is a wealth of playing here, with two discs clocking in at almost 80 minutes each. The vibe is almost like a party, as Kaiser and Smith corral a very large group of special guests alongside their “Yo Miles! Band” of seven. ...The playing, at times, is reminiscent of Davis’ multiple-guitar bands of this post-Bitches Brew period. ... In fact, songs within songs can be heard, with arrangements and a variety of moods....This was a period in Davis’ career when recording was an almost completely live phenomenon. Hence, long... selections ...One need only go back and listen to what Davis...did with the incredibly dynamic original takes of most of this music to realize that, even though the harmonic complexities of bop and what the American Songbook offered were in the process of being removed (to be replaced by the dominant simplicity of the new bass lines), other equally intriguing complexities were replacing them. As for *Yo Miles!*, one need only listen to Kaiser and Smith’s version of the playful, hypnotic “Calypso Frelimo,” *Yo Miles!*’s peak, to hear the best mix of this band’s originality blended with Smith’s fiery wah-wah trumpet and his definitive stamp on Davis’ sound. Here is the best example of why this tribute was done in the first place. Credit producers Kaiser and Chris Muir with a great sound (in HCDC) bringing to fruition a mostly hot, loving tribute to some damn hard music to play. 4 stars” –*DownBeat*, Dec 1998

“Looking at this body of work today, much of the music is an inspiration, directly or indirectly, to the genres of fusion, dub, jungle, ambient, and avant-rock, as well as the way music could be “constructed” in the studio. Smith says, “On *Yo Miles!*, our approach came out of understanding the historical significance...and approaching the music in new and creative ways. To use the magic to go somewhere new that neither we nor Miles had been before.” –Mark Keresman, *East Bay Express*, Oct 23-29

“But while in a way these are very faithful renditions, the material being covered was so expansive and dependent upon the individual musicians’ interpretation that it’s less like a collection of tunes and more like a format in which to operate. The frequently meandering tracks are full of happening solos...” –Pete Gershon, *Signal to Noise*, Nov-Dec 1998

“*Yo Miles!* Is a cocky, raucous time trip to Davis’s most controversial period. Containing 160 minutes of music on two discs, it throws as many as 11 musicians against dense musical stews like *Agharta*, *Ife* and Davis’s soundtrack to *Jack Johnson*. Kaiser takes the most liberal approach to the material, using everything from Hawaiian-style slide to hyperdriven metal to reinterpret guitar parts originated by John McLaughlin and Pete Cosey. Smith is nothing short of stunning, turning in some of his best performances ever, including a brawny solo on *Calypso Frelimo* that far outdistances Davis’s original. 4 stars”
–*Ottawa Citizen*, Aug. 29, 1998

“Those seeking a highly accessible introduction to Leo Smith arte directed to “Y Miles!,” his current collaboration with guitarist Henry Kaiser... This one’s a beauty and with more than 2 1/2 hours of music, a bargain to boot.” –*Billboard*, Sept. 5, 1998

“Guitar maven Kaiser was going to do his homage to Miles Davis’ electric period...sans trumpet, until he found AACM-er Smith. Together with monster bassist Michael Manning, unsung guitar daredevil Nels Cline and a cast of all-stars including John Medeski on organ, Freddie Roulette and Elliott Sharp on lap steel guitars and the Rova Saxophone quartet, they capture the renegade spirit of Miles’ most notorious band. This superb 2-CD set is chock-full of intense, sprawling jams that carry on well beyond reason. ...Wadada, brandishing electric wah-trumpet for the first time in a distinguished career that includes collaborations with notable avant-gardists, blows with unbridled boldness throughout, referencing rather than imitating Miles. 4 1/2 stars.–Bill Milkowski, *Pulse!*, Oct 1998

“This two-CD set – sprawling jams that evolve organically just as the pieces did on *Dark Magus*, *Panagea*, *Agharta*, *In Concert*, *One the Corner* and *Get Up With It* – captures the renegade spirit of Miles’ most provocative music. ...”The whole process was a little different than covering tunes,” says Kaiser, who has also recorded and performed tributes to Albert Ayler and the Grateful Dead. “We just tried to understand the Miles system and apply it.” –Bill Milkowski, *Jazz Times*, Nov 1998

“Trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith has one of the more interesting Miles Davis tributes out... He’s the only trumpeter we’ve ever heard who creates the same electric feel and wah-wah effects Davis used with such great impact on *Live/Evil* and other of his recordings from the early ‘70s.”
–Bill Kohlhaase, *L.A. Weekly*, Nov 13-19, 1998

“...their performances are thoughtful, well-paced, and stimulating. There are fewer long solos than on Davis’ albums, more emphasis placed on collective improvisation, but the Kaiser/ Smith group displays its own personality, which differentiates it from many other Davis tribute outfits. 3 1/2 stars”
–Harvey Pekar, *Austin Chronicle*, Oct 16, 1998

“Miles headed into the ‘60s ...as a complete and devoted musician who had mastered tone, time, tunefulness, and texture, seeking to broaden his command with a new sonic palette provided by amplification and the era’s increased awareness of other cultures, as well as the dynamism of improvisation and rock and roll. His strategy can be summed up more simply as “Onward and upward, baby.”

That’s a philosophy shared by two of today’s greatest improvisers, guitarist Henry Kaiser and trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith. Together they’ve fashioned a tribute in their new *Yo Miles!*. Offering adaptations of post-Bitches Brew Miles numbers... *Yo Miles!* is relentlessly exciting. Kaiser and Smith, with a core band... match Davis’s recordings in virtuosity and intensity. And they bring in fresh splashes of instrumental color...There’s also a marvelous Smith composition...In 11 minutes it sums up the last 30 years of Miles’s music.” –Ted Drozdowski, “Mo’ Miles,” *Boston Phoenix*, Nov. 13, 1998

“The best thing about this album, that sets it apart from other ‘cover’ albums, is that the musicians do not play the songs exactly as Miles originally played them two and a half decades ago. Each musician brought their personal experience and style to the session and expanded on Miles’ work. The quality of these songs are amazing...” –*The Spectrum* (Sate U of NY at Buffalo), Dec. 11