



# Albert Ayler La Cave Live Cleveland 1966 Revisited

With Donald Ayler, Frank Wright,

Michael Sampson, Clyde Shy as Mutawef Shaheed & Roland Shannon Jackson

Albert Ayler  
La Cave Live  
Cleveland 1966  
Revisited

For believers and non-believers alike, it is the Holy Ghost that presents the problem. How are we meant to understand it? As pure spirit? As a revenant? As merely the balance that holds Father and Son together. In Andrei Rublev's most famous icon, the Trinity is portrayed as three vigorous young men, organised without the use of modern perspective, in a dynamic triangle. It is impossible at first glance to tell apart Father, who we would presume to be aged, and Son, who logically ought to be younger. But what of the Holy Spirit: should it (he?) have a physical form at all.

made available. Sanders, again, continues to ply his trade past the age of 80, twice that achieved on earth by John Coltrane. But Albert Ayler continues to resist and escape us. In part, this is because his own mind was clouded and his grasp on everyday reality often uncertain. He shared with brother Don a tendency to depression and mental disorder, and in the end that was what destroyed him. Forget the conspiracy theories. Albert was an all too familiar statistic. However horrified we might be by the death by police hands of young African-Americans, there is an even more frightening figure lying down among in the small typeface: the needless deaths of African-American men failed by the mental health system.

There are other, more artistic reasons, why Albert Ayler might seem far from us. His music espoused a

Albert Ayler famously said "Trane was the Father, Pharoah was the Son, I am the Holy Ghost". It's a description whose tenses seem a little ironic now, because Pharoah Sanders is [in 2021] still with us, while Albert has been gone these fifty years. If he believed that he carried forward the great transformation in jazz that Coltrane represented, he was not fated to do so for long in an earthly way.

In a curious sense, Albert Ayler now seems more distant from us – thus maybe confirming some aspects of his boldly blasphemous claim – than either of the other two. Coltrane's music is again all around us, as live tapes and unreleased studio material are

certain "primitivism" that seemed to evoke the gatherings and rituals of ancestral peoples and early settlers. The word "primitive" itself has to be used with great care, but given that there is a strain of Christianity that identifies itself as such – upper-class Primitive – that should be our point of reference, in the same way as "radical" always needs to be seen as something to do with roots.

Albert was a primitive in the same sense that he was a radical. He went back to the origins of things, digging deep. But there is another sense in which he seems fugitive. Quite simply, he didn't leave behind very much. In comparison to Coltrane,

who had substantial official recording careers at Prestige and Impulse!, with a single Blue Note title teasingly punctuating the list, in comparison to Sanders who has continued to release music in constantly evolving forms. Albert Ayler left only a scattering of studio releases, of which the last few still provoke fierce discussion. Were they a surrender to r'n'b populism, or where they the logical extension of everything that had gone before? The jury is still out.

Hence the excitement fifteen years ago when a whole box of hitherto unreleased Albert Ayler material appeared on the Revenant imprint (which explains that word in the opening paragraph!) as *Holy Ghost: Rare and Unissued Recordings 1962 – 1970*, the most concentrated documentation of Albert Ayler's work there had ever been.

It is almost a market law that box sets are bought and treasured but rarely listened to. They are like family Bibles, full of significant inscriptions, but con-signed forever to a shelf. The record you are holding offers an opportunity to listen to Albert at a key moment in his creative life and for the moment unencumbered by the monumentalism of a box set. In between, he had worked as steadily as at any time in his life, making the Village Vanguard recordings that appeared on Impulse! as *Live In Greenwich Village* and, with essentially the same line-up, the superb European performances from the previous month that appeared on hatART and/or hat[OLOGY] as *Berlin/Lörrach/Paris/Stockholm 1966*. These are justifiably celebrated recordings and have become key texts in the Ayler story. Other recordings of the time find him in



Albert Ayler and Donald Ayler at La Cave

Slugs' Saloon, a hub for hard bop-into-free jazz. Almost unknown was the series of tapes made in April 1966 at a club called La Cave. It was all the more significant because it was located in Albert's home town of Cleveland.

Half a century after he left us, we are still catching up with Albert Ayler and still coming to terms with his unique synthesis of the traditional and the avant-garde. This is another important document in that belated journey of discoveries and is some of his emotionally freest playing.

**Brian Morton, September 2021**

A new Albert Ayler recording is something of an event because it adds to a relatively thin discography. Almost unknown was the series of tapes made in April 1966 at a club called La Cave. It was all the more significant because it was located in Albert Ayler's home town of Cleveland. Half a century after he left us, we are still catching up with Albert Ayler and still coming to terms with his unique synthesis of the traditional and the avant-garde. This is another important document in that belated journey of discoveries and is some of his emotionally freest playing.

*Brian Morton*

**Albert Ayler**  
**La Cave Live**  
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CD 1123-1

Albert Ayler tenor saxophone

Donald Ayler trumpet

Michael Sampson violin

Clyde Shy as Mutawef Shaheed double bass

Ronald Shannon Jackson drums

Recorded April 16, 1966 at La Cave, Cleveland:

1 **Spirits Rejoice**

2 **D.C.**

by Don Cherry

3 **Untitled** (minor waltz)

4 **Our Prayer**

by Don Ayler

5 **Untitled** (F # tune)

6 **Ghosts**

Recorded April 17, 1966 at La Cave, Cleveland, 1st set:

7 **Spirits Rejoice**

8 **Prophet/Ghosts/**

**Spiritual Bells**

9 **Out Prayer\*/Spirits Rejoice**

\*by Don Ayler

Total Time ADD <sup>24</sup>**Bit**

XX:XX

All compositions by Albert Ayler,  
except otherwise indicated.

ISRC CH 132.2021... to ISRC CH.132.2021...

CD 1123-2

Albert Ayler tenor saxophone

Donald Ayler trumpet

Frank Wright tenor saxophone

Michael Sampson violin

Clyde Shy as Mutawef Shaheed double bass

Ronald Shannon Jackson drums

Recorded April 17, 1966 at La Cave, Cleveland, 2nd set:

1 **Untitled/Truth Is Marching In**

2 **Spirits**

3 **Zion Hill**

4 **Spirits**

5 **Spiritual Bells**

6 **Untitled** (F # tune)

Total Time ADD <sup>24</sup>**Bit** XX:XX

All compositions by Albert Ayler.

ISRC CH 132.2021... to ISRC CH.132.2021...

CD-master by Michael Brändli, Hardstudios AG;  
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Honorary producer: Bernhard „Benne“ Vischer.

Generous contributions by Christian C. Dalucas,  
George G. Schmid and Mario DaRugna made the  
production of this 2 CD set possible.

These tracks are receiving the first authorized release  
by permission of the Estate of Albert Ayler, represented  
by Desiree Ayler-Fellows.

Michael Brändli's exceptional mastering allowed us to  
release the concerts, which were recorded under  
difficult technical circumstances, under the Revisited  
series of ezz-thetics.

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**#帽子**

John Coltrane Quartet  
Newport, New York,  
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ezz-thetics 1114

Archie Shepp  
Blasé And Yasmina  
ezz-thetics 1115

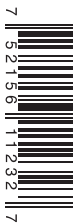
Mike Taylor Trio,  
Quartet & Composer  
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Albert Ayler Quintet 1966  
Berlin, Lörrach,  
Paris & Stockholm  
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