

= Agharta (album) =

Agharta is a 1975 live double album by American jazz musician Miles Davis . By the time he recorded the album , Davis was 48 years old and had alienated many in the jazz community while attracting younger rock audiences with his radical electric fusion music . After experimenting with different line @-@ ups , he established a stable live band in 1973 and toured constantly for the next two years , despite physical pain from worsening health issues and emotional instability brought on by substance abuse . During a three @-@ week tour of Japan in 1975 , Davis performed two concerts at the Festival Hall in Osaka on February 1 ; the afternoon show produced Agharta and the evening show was released as Pangaea the following year .

Davis led a septet at the concert ; saxophonist Sonny Fortune , bassist Michael Henderson , and guitarist Pete Cosey were given space to improvise against a dense backdrop of riffs , electronic effects , cross @-@ beats , and funk grooves from the rhythm section ? drummer Al Foster , guitarist Reggie Lucas , and percussionist James Mtume . Davis controlled their rhythmic and musical direction with hand and head gestures , phrases played on his wah @-@ wah processed trumpet , and drones from an accompanying electric organ . The evolving nature of the performance led to the widespread misunderstanding that Agharta 's music had no compositional basis .

Agharta was first released in Japan by CBS / Sony in August 1975 just before Davis retired due to increasingly poor health and exhaustion . At the record label 's suggestion , it was titled after the legendary subterranean city . Davis enlisted Japanese artist Tadanori Yokoo to design its artwork , which depicted the cityscape of an advanced civilization with elements inspired by Eastern subterranean myths and Afrofuturism . An alternate cover was produced for the album 's 1976 release in North America by Columbia Records .

A highly divisive record , Agharta further challenged Davis ' jazz audience and was widely panned by contemporary critics ; reviewers found the music discordant , and complained of Cosey 's loud guitar sounds and Davis ' sparse trumpet playing . It was reevaluated positively in subsequent years , while a generation of younger musicians was influenced by the band 's abrasive music and cathartic playing , particularly Cosey 's effects @-@ laden free improvisations . Agharta became viewed as an important jazz @-@ rock record , a dramatically dynamic group performance , and the culmination of Davis ' electric period spanning the late 1960s and mid @-@ 1970s .

= = Background = =

In the early 1970s , Miles Davis continued exploring directions radically different from the jazz music that made him renowned in the 1950s and 1960s . The music from this electric period in his career found him experimenting with rock , funk , African rhythms , emerging electronic music technology , and an ever @-@ changing lineup of musicians who played electric instruments . Davis attracted younger audiences as his fusion music became more radical and abstract while alienating older listeners , musicians , and critics in the jazz scene who accused him of selling out . After his 1972 album On the Corner , he began to focus more on performing live , working in the studio only sporadically and haphazardly ; the 1974 releases Big Fun and Get Up with It compiled recordings he made between 1969 and 1974 . By 1973 , Davis had established most of his band 's line @-@ up , a septet featuring bassist Michael Henderson , guitarists Pete Cosey and Reggie Lucas , drummer Al Foster , percussionist James Mtume , and saxophonist Dave Liebman ; Liebman left the group in 1974 and was replaced by Sonny Fortune . Lucas , Foster , and Mtume functioned as the band 's rhythm section , while Cosey , Henderson , and Fortune were given space to improvise as soloists . Their concerts ? played frequently at rock venues and festivals ? became opportunities for Davis and his sidemen to test new musical ideas and ways to exploit electronic equipment .

Davis toured relentlessly for two years while tolerating intense physical pain and difficulty walking , caused by joint pain from sickle @-@ cell anaemia , badly damaged ankles after a 1972 car wreck , and osteoporosis in his left hip , which had been operated on a decade earlier . He had also developed nodules on his larynx that often left him short of breath , especially when playing the trumpet . To numb the pain , he became increasingly dependent on self @-@ medicating with

painkillers , cocaine , and morphine , which combined with his alcohol and recreational drug use led to mood swings ; he would by turns feel vulnerable and hostile . By the end of 1974 , a disappointing showing in Down Beat magazine 's readers poll reinforced to Davis that his reputation had diminished . Unfazed by detractors and personal troubles , he kept his touring schedule intense . " He was like the general looking at the fort and they had a moat and we were going to get in that fort " , Henderson later said . " That was the attitude of the band . We didn 't give a shit what the critics said . People are gonna like what they like , but if you don 't like it , respect it . Respect that I have the right to do what I do . Because with or without you , we 're going to do it anyway . "

In 1975 , the 48 @-@ year old Davis embarked on a three @-@ week tour of Japan ; between January 22 and February 8 , he played 14 concerts in large @-@ hall venues to capacity crowds and enthusiastic reviews . Japanese critic Keizo Takada said Davis was leading his " magnificent and energetic " band just as Duke Ellington had his orchestra : " Miles must be the genius of managing men and bringing out their hidden talent . " Throughout the tour , Davis had been sick with pneumonia and a bleeding ulcer that grew worse , while his hip occasionally and unpredictably slipped out of its socket . Unable to work his trumpet 's volume and effects pedals because of the pain in his legs , he would go down on his knees to press them with his hand during performances . To relieve his pain and perform , Davis used codeine and morphine , smoked , and drank large quantities of Heineken beer . On several occasions , he was able to play two concerts in one day , as he did on February 1 at the Festival Hall in Osaka . " The Japanese people were very beautiful " , Henderson recalled from the concerts . " They came in with their suit and ties on and we proceeded to blow the roof off the suckers with a million amplifiers . " The performances were recorded by Japan 's CBS / Sony record label under the supervision of Teo Macero , Davis ' producer of 15 years . They were released as two double albums ? Agharta , featuring the afternoon concert , was first released in Japan in August 1975 and later in North America in 1976 ; the evening show was issued in Japan as Pangaea in 1976 .

= = Composition and performance = =

For the first of the afternoon concert 's two sets , Davis ' septet performed the compositions " Tatu " , " Agharta Prelude " , and " Maiysha " (from Get Up with It) , making up Agharta 's first disc of music . The second @-@ set performances of " Right Off " (from Davis ' 1971 album Jack Johnson) , " Ife " (from Big Fun) , and " Wili (= For Dave) " spanned the second disc ; between the " Right Off " and " Ife " segments , the band improvised a passage based on " So What " (from Davis ' 1959 album Kind of Blue) for 41 seconds after Henderson started to play its ostinato . The pieces were performed in medleys , which were given generic track titles on the record , such as " Prelude " and " Interlude " . As with his other live releases in the 1970s , Davis refused to have individual compositions specified in the track listing because he felt critics and other listeners often overlooked the music 's intrinsic meaning by indulging in abstract musical analysis . " I 'm not doing anything , it doesn 't need an explanation " , Davis later told Leonard Feather . Music scholars were able to identify the pieces through an examination of what Davis researcher Enrico Merlin called " coded phrases " , which Davis played on trumpet or organ to signify the end of one segment and direct the band toward the next section . He first used such cues and modulations when recording " Flamenco Sketches " in 1959 , Merlin said .

The pieces featured on Agharta were part of a typical set list for the group , but their performances of each sometimes changed almost beyond recognition from concert to concert . This , along with the track names , led to the widespread misunderstanding that the music was mostly or entirely improvised and unstructured . Lucas explained that the band started each performance with a " very defined compositional basis " before developing it further in a highly structured yet " very free way " ; the " Right Off " segment was improvised from the original recording 's E @-@ flat riff . Davis had the band play around a single chord in a piece for several minutes with variations as each member performed in a different time signature ; Foster might have been playing in common time and Mtume in compound duple metre or septuple time , while the guitarists would comp in another tempo altogether . " That 's a lot of intricate shit we were working off this one chord " , Davis remarked .

From Lucas ' perspective , this kind of " structured improvisation " resulted in significant interplay between the rhythm section and allowed the band to improvise " a lot more than just the notes that were being played in the solos ; we were improvising the entire song as we went along . "

Like Pangaea and Dark Magus ? the two other albums showcasing the septet ? Agharta revealed what Amiri Baraka described as Davis ' affinity for minimalism . He abandoned melodic and harmonic conventions in favor of riffs , cross @-@ rhythms , and funk grooves as a backdrop for soloists to improvise throughout . Davis had preferred understated compositions throughout his career but by the mid 1970s he showed a deeper embrace of rhythm , inspired by Afrocentric politics . When Mtume and Cosey joined the band , his live music lost most of its " European sensibilities " and " settled down into a deep African thing , a deep African @-@ American groove " emphasizing rhythm and drums rather than individual solos , Davis said , although he did not completely reject melody . " We ain 't in Africa , and we don 't play just chants . There 's some theory under what we do . " Simon Reynolds , who categorized Agharta as a jazz @-@ rock record , wrote in The Wire that the music " offered a drastic intensification of rock 's three most radical aspects : space , timbre , and groove " . In Martha Bayles ' opinion , it drew from jazz only in its element of free improvisation and from rock only in its use of electronics and " ear @-@ bleeding volume " . The album also showcased Davis ' avant @-@ garde impulses ; according to Greg Tate , the septet created " a pan @-@ ethnic web of avant @-@ garde music " , while Phil Alexander from Mojo said it was " both ambient yet thrashing , melodic yet coruscating " , and suggestive of Karlheinz Stockhausen 's electronic experiments .

During the concert , Davis directed approximately 50 stops or breaks to the band , particularly the rhythm section , by gesturing with his head or hand . These stops served as dramatic turning points in the tension @-@ release structure of the performances , changing their tempo and allowing the band to alternate between quiet passages and intense climaxes . Davis also interjected the performances with drone washes from his Yamaha organ , achieving a " strange , nearly perverse presence " that Mikal Gilmore believed " defined the temper " of the music . Lucas said Davis applied a feel for dynamics he had developed earlier in his career playing jazz but with a greater array of contrasts , including atonal , dissonant chords , and his own bebop trumpet playing set against the group 's funk rhythms . " Extreme textures and extreme volume " , Lucas explained , " were as much part of the palette as the contrasting chord and rhythmic structures . Being equipped like a full rock band , we sometimes literally blew the walls out . " During the " Tatu " and " Agharta Prelude " segments , Davis abruptly stopped and started the septet several times to shift tempos by playing a dissonant , cacophonous organ figure , giving Cosey space to generate eccentric , psychedelic figures and effects . The main theme for " Tatu " had been played at a slower tempo when Cosey first joined Davis ' band , but they played it faster as their rapport grew , especially by the time of the Japanese tour . Cosey credited Davis with having the ability to " transmit thoughts and ideas " to the soloists with his playing .

The rhythmic direction of the music was occasionally interrupted by densely layered percussive and electronic effects , including repeated whirring and grinding sounds . Cosey generated these sounds by running his guitar through a ring modulator and an EMS Synthesizer A. The latter device was an early synthesizer with knobs and buttons but no keyboard , making it useful for producing abstract noises rather than exact pitches and melodies . He used it to suggest a certain soundscape during each performance , " whether we were in space , or underwater or a group of Africans playing ? just different soundscapes " . Onstage , he also had a table set up holding a mbira , claves , agogo bells , and several other hand percussion instruments , which he played or struck with a mallet to indicate a different break or stop . " I would hit them just like they do at [boxing] fights ! " , Cosey recalled . His synthesizer sometimes interacted with the experimental sounds Mtume was able to generate from his drum machine , such as during the " Ife " segment . Davis gave the instrument to Mtume after receiving it from Yamaha , the Japanese tour 's sponsor , and told him " see what you can do with it . " Rather than use it to create rhythms , Mtume processed the drum machine through several different pedals and phase shifters such as the Mu @-@ Tron Bi @-@ Phase , creating a sound he said was " total tapestry " .

Unlike Davis ' previous recordings , the cadenzas throughout Agharta were mostly played by

Fortune and Cosey . Fortune alternated between soprano and alto saxophones and the flute , performing with a " substance and structure " Gilmore believed was very much indebted to John Coltrane during his A Love Supreme (1965) period . He performed his longest alto saxophone solo on " Right Off " , which opened the record 's second disc in a " propulsive " segment Gilmore said " flies by like a train ride in a dream , where scenes flash past the window in a fascinating and illusive dream " . Cosey played a Guild S @-@ 100 electric guitar and heavily employed chromaticism , dissonance , and feedback in his improvisations on Agharta . He alternated between several effects pedals set up underneath his table of percussion instruments , including a fuzzbox for distorting guitar sounds and two different wah @-@ wah pedals he used during solos or when playing more mellow tones . Cosey often arranged his guitar strings in different places on the fretboard and never played in standard tuning , using at least 36 different tuning systems , each of which altered the style and sound of his playing . According to Tzvi Gluckin from Premier Guitar , his experimental guitar playing was rooted in the blues and displayed a sense of phrasing that was aggressive and " blistering " yet " somehow also restrained " , particularly in his control of feedback .

Davis had enlisted Cosey to provide his music with sounds from the electric blues and Jimi Hendrix , whose use of distortion and the E @-@ flat tuning was shared by Cosey . According to Charles Shaar Murray , he evoked the guitarist 's echoic , free jazz @-@ inspired solos while Lucas performed in the manner of Hendrix 's more lyrical rhythm and blues songs ; Cosey 's guitar was separated to the left channel and Lucas ' to the right on Agharta . Jazz scholar Stuart Nicholson wrote that Davis utilized his guitarists in a way which realized the " waves of harmonic distortion " Hendrix had explored in his own music . In Murray 's view , the album invoked his influence on Davis more explicitly than any other of his records ; Nicholson considered it to be the " closest approximation " to the music they could have recorded together . Davis veered from succinct and expressive solos to unsentimental wails on his trumpet , which suggested he was still mourning Hendrix 's 1970 death , Murray surmised . That year , Davis had started playing with a wah @-@ wah pedal affixed to his trumpet in order to emulate the register Hendrix achieved on his guitar . By the time of the concert , Davis had developed what Philip Freeman described as " a new tone , the wiggly , shimmering ribbons of sound that are heard on Agharta " , where his wah @-@ wah processed solos often sounded frantic and melancholic , like " twisted streams of raw pain " .

Davis played his trumpet sparsely throughout the concert , often sounding obscured by the rhythm section . His presence on Agharta reflected what John Szwed called " the feel and shape of a musician 's late work , an egoless music that precedes its creator 's death " . Drawing on Theodor W. Adorno 's commentary of Ludwig van Beethoven 's late works , Szwed said " the disappearance of the musician into the work is a bow to mortality . It was as if Miles were testifying to all that he had been witness to for the past thirty years , both terrifying and joyful . " After Lucas ' first and only solo of the show climaxed the " lfe " segment , Davis introduced " Wili (= For Dave) " with a few organ chords , culminating in Cosey 's final solo and a trumpet passage by Davis , which Paul Tingen characterized as plaintive and introspective . According to him , live music shows typically developed toward reaching a final climax , but Davis ' concerts " often dissolved into entropy " . On Agharta , Tingen said , a " deep sadness " hung over the music as the energy of the " Wili (= For Dave) " piece " slowly drained away " to the record 's fade out . The Japanese CD edition ended with nine more minutes of atmospheric feedback , percussion , and synthesizer sounds .

= = Title and packaging = =

Agharta 's title was proposed by CBS / Sony as a reference to the subterranean utopian city . The city 's legend was one of several Eastern versions of the Hollow Earth theory proposing that an ancient high culture originally lived on the Earth 's surface but was forced to flee below because of some political or geological crisis . The myth depicted the city as a divine source of power , claiming that its inhabitants were highly spiritual , advanced beings who would save the Earth from materialism and destructive technology after a cataclysmic event . It was first conceived by 19th @-@ century French thinker Louis Jacolliot as a land ruled by an Ethiopian ruler ; Alexandre Saint @-@ Yves d 'Alveydre later described it as " drowning in celestial radiances all visible distinctions of

race in a single chromatic of light and sound , singularly removed from the usual notions of perspective and acoustics . "

The album 's artwork was designed by Japanese artist Tadanori Yokoo , who had been creating silkscreen prints on themes of Agharta and the mythical kingdom of Shambhala the year before the Festival Hall concert ; his artwork for Carlos Santana 's 1974 album Lotus featured such themes . In the early 1970s , Yokoo had found his growing popularity in Japan distracting and moved to the United States , where he was able to get more of his work published . After returning to Japan , he received a phone call from Davis , who had seen his work and wanted him to create a cover for the Agharta record . Before designing the cover , Yokoo listened to a preliminary tape of the concert , meditated , and reflected on his reading of Raymond W. Bernard 's 1969 book The Hollow Earth . Bernard had written that the city existed in a large cavern in the center of the Earth , while Yokoo said he believed " Agharta could be down there under the sea like Atlantis or even hidden in the jungle like the lost city of El Dorado . " He also drew on elements from other Eastern subterranean myths and Afrofuturism in his design . Critics who eventually saw the album 's packaging thought he had been inspired instead by the psychedelic drugs popular at the time .

The front cover depicted an advanced civilization with a vast landscape of skyscrapers and red , sunburst @-@ like flames rising out of the cityscape as representations of Agharta 's power . Yokoo used a combination of collage , airbrushing , and painting techniques as he had with his previous work , along with postcards collected from his trips to Tahiti and New York City ; the cityscape on the front cover was taken from one of his postcards . The back cover showed the city submerged in water , embedded in coral reefs , and hovered over by a diver , fish , and a squid ascending from the city . According to graphic designers Storm Thorgerson and Aubrey Powell , Yokoo depicted groups of jellyfish , coral reefs , and brightly colored fish to suggest an association between Agharta and Atlantis . The foreground of the back cover 's illustration featured a reptilian creature . Cultural studies researcher Dagmar Buchwald interpreted this image as an allusion to similar ideas about Lemuria , a mythological continent during Earth 's prehistory that was inhabited by an advanced civilization later forced under the Earth 's surface after its homeland was destroyed by a great flood .

A UFO was also depicted on the back cover , either ascending or descending in a spotlight over Agharta . The album 's inside packaging featured images of winged superhuman beings known as the Agharta supermen , who guarded the city 's entrances and secret tunnels . An inscription in the original LP 's gatefold sleeve explained the connection between the UFO and the Agharta supermen : " During various periods in history the supermen of Agharta came to the surface of Earth to teach the human race how to live together in peace and save us from wars , catastrophe , and destruction . The apparent sighting of several flying saucers soon after the bombing of Hiroshima may represent one visitation . " The album 's 1976 North American release had different artwork designed by John Berg , the art director from Davis ' U.S. label Columbia Records . In its liner notes , an inscription said the record should be listened to at the highest possible volume , and Davis was credited for the arrangements . After it was released , Macero received a complaint from Columbia 's accounting department about Davis being compensated \$ 2 @,@ 500 per arrangement , arguing that none of the music sounded as if it had been arranged .

= = Reception and legacy = =

Agharta was originally panned by critics , becoming the most widely criticized of Davis ' double albums in the 1970s . According to The Stranger 's Dave Segal , it was one of the most divisive records ever , challenging both critics and the artist 's core audience much in the same way Lou Reed 's Metal Machine Music album had in 1975 . In The New York Times , Robert Palmer wrote that Agharta was marred by long stretches of " sloppy , one @-@ chord jams " , disjointed sounds , and a banal quality clearly rendered by the impeccable Japanese engineering . He complained that Davis ' use of the wah @-@ wah pedal inhibited his ability to phrase notes and that the septet sounded poor " by rock standards " , particularly Cosey , whose overamplified guitar " whined and rumbled like a noisy machine shop " , relegating Lucas to background riffs . Jazz Forum critic

Andrzej Trzaskowski said *Fortune* seemed to be the only jazz musician on the record, finding his solos often flawless while disparaging the performances of Davis, Lucas, and Cosey, whose guitar and synthesizer effects he found pointlessly brutal. In Trzaskowski's opinion, the individual segments did not cohere as a whole and were further hampered by the clichéd "rock phraseology" of the guitarists, whom he said lacked wit, harmony, and taste. Ian Carr, a biographer of Davis, felt his trumpet sounded fatigued, dejected, and out of place with the band's intense rhythms and monotonously noisy guitars; in general, he found the music "too non @-@ Western in the sense of too much rhythm and not enough structure".

In *The Village Voice*, Gary Giddins penned an angrily dismissive review of *Agharta*, in which he charged Davis with failing to assert his musical presence on the terribly "sad" record. A few days after it was published, he was sent a package full of large cotton swabs, industrial @-@ strength scouring pads, and a card that read, "The next time you review Miles Davis clean out your head." Although Giddins dismissed the message, *Agharta* grew to become one of his favorite albums from Davis' electric period, as he reevaluated its elements of drama, relentless tension, and what he considered the best performances of Fortune and Cosey's careers. "There really is not a moment when the music fails to reflect the ministrations of the sorcerer himself", Giddins wrote. Nathan Cobb from *The Boston Globe* reviewed the record favorably in 1976, calling it "a kind of firestorm for the '70s" with a "positively cosmic" rhythmic foundation and Davis "the one who leads the others through the unknown waters of electronic jazz rock". In *Down Beat*, Gilmore said the band performed best on the side one and three's breakneck segments, where Cosey's ferocious playing "achieved a staggering emotional dimension" lacking on the slower passages, which were redeemed by Davis' elegiac trumpet. The concert itself was received enthusiastically by the Osaka audience. "I had no idea what [they] were going to do", Henderson recalled. "They gave us a standing ovation that was almost as long as the concert."

After returning from Japan, Davis fell ill again and was hospitalized for three months. He held a few more concerts and studio sessions with the band, but his health worsened; their last show on September 5, 1975, in Central Park ended abruptly when Davis left the stage and began to cry in pain. He retired soon after, citing physical, spiritual, and creative exhaustion, and lived as a recluse for the next several years, often struggling with bouts of depression and further medical treatment. *Agharta* was reassessed positively by critics during this period, and in 1980 Davis returned to recording music. He abandoned the direction he had pursued in the 1970s, instead playing a style of fusion far more melodic and accessible to audiences, until his death in 1991. The day after he died, Prague's Wenceslas Square saw the opening of the AghaRTA Jazz Centrum, a small jazz club named after the album, hosting nightly performances and an annual jazz festival played by local and international acts. In January of that year, the album was reissued in the U.S. by Columbia on CD, featuring a remaster Tingen said was inferior to the original LP in sound and mix quality. Sony later remastered the album again as part of their Miles Davis reissue campaign and Master Sound series in Japan, which improved its sound using Super Bit Mapping. This remaster was made available in the U.S. for the first time in 2009, when *Agharta* was one of 52 albums re @-@ issued in mini @-@ LP replica sleeves as a part of Miles Davis: The Complete Columbia Album Collection, a box set released by Sony Legacy.

Of the albums documenting Davis' 1973-75 band, *Agharta* was considered by many critics to be the best. For Tingen, it represented the "high plateau" of Davis' electric explorations; because he had given the band leeway for constant interplay, the music exhibited an "organic and fluid quality", with a greater variety of textures, rhythms, timbres, and moods than *Dark Magus*. Davis biographer Jack Chambers believed it proved far better than most of his other electric albums; the "Maiysha" and "Jack Johnson" segments, Chambers wrote, "magically brought into focus the musical forces over which many thought Davis had lost control". Reflecting on his 1970s concert recordings, J. D. Considine contended that *Agharta*'s "alternately audacious, poetic, hypnotic, and abrasive" music had endured the passage of time best. Although Davis' use of wah @-@ wah was frequently dismissed in the past as a failed experiment, Richard Cook and Brian Morton wrote in *The Penguin Guide to Jazz* (2006) that the effects pedal in fact helped him achieve remarkably adventurous playing on the album, "creating surges and ebbs in a harmonically static line, allowing

Miles to build huge melismatic variations on a single note " . Cook named it among Davis ' best works and the culmination of the music he had begun to explore on Bitches Brew (1970) ; as well as possessing an " epic " sound and scope , Agharta was " a great band record " , in his opinion . " Even though Davis contributed only telling details , he still cued exceptional performances from his men . " Robert Christgau saw it as his finest music since Jack Johnson , an " angry , dissociated , funky " record built on the septet 's virtuosic performance , particularly Foster 's " guileless show of shops " and Fortune 's woodwind playing , which he deemed the best on a Davis album from this decade . Henry Kaiser called Agharta the best ensemble performance of jazz 's electric era , and Steve Holtje , writing in MusicHound Jazz (1998) , credited Davis with conducting the album 's " heroes " to sculpt " moments of shattering beauty and soul @-@ rending vehemence " .

Despite being one of Davis ' lesser @-@ known records , Agharta belonged to a period in his career that influenced artists in British jazz , new wave , and punk rock , including guitarists Robert Quine and Tom Verlaine . It inspired a generation of musicians to focus on cathartic playing rather than precise instrumentation and composition . Quine was particularly fascinated by Cosey 's electric guitar sounds ; Lester Bangs , who attended his performance with the Voidoids in 1977 , claimed " he steals from Agharta ! And makes it work ! " Other writers later lauded the quality and originality of Cosey 's playing on the album , viewing it as a standard for guitar mastery and compositional contrast . Down Beat critic Bill Milkowski credited his excursive style for " spawning an entire school of ' sick ' guitar playing " and said the combination of Fortune 's acerbic sax lines atop Foster , Henderson , and Lucas ' syncopated grooves were 10 years ahead of Steve Coleman and Greg Osby 's M @-@ Base experiments . Tingen found Cosey 's solos amazingly revealing and still ahead of their time when heard decades later : " Sometimes growling , scurrying around all corners like a caged tiger , sometimes soaring like a bird , sometimes deliriously abstract , sometimes elegantly melodic and tender , his electric guitar concept is one of the most original to have been devised on the instrument . " In Christgau 's opinion , " the noises he produced for the second half of side one comprise some of the greatest free improvisations ever heard in a ' jazz ' - ' rock ' context . "

According to Nicholson , Agharta and other jazz @-@ rock recordings such as Emergency ! (1970) by the Tony Williams Lifetime suggested the genre was progressing toward " a whole new musical language ... a wholly independent genre quite apart from the sound and conventions of anything that had gone before " . This development dwindled with the commercialism of jazz in the 1980s , he said , although Agharta remained a pivotal and influential record through the 1990s , especially on artists in the experimental rock genre . Along with On the Corner , it was also a major influence on the Beastie Boys ' 1994 hip hop album Ill Communication . In 1998 , composer and bandleader David Sanford completed his dissertation on Agharta as a doctoral student in composition at Princeton University . In it , he argued that the album demonstrated how jazz has utilized a variety of external influences " to evolve or modernize itself " . In an interview several years later , Sanford said it was an important work that had gone to the " fringes of jazz " and a place most other music has not explored since . In the All Music Guide to Jazz (2002) , Thom Jurek considered it to be inarguably the " greatest electric funk @-@ rock jazz record ever " and declared " there is simply nothing like Agharta in the canon of recorded music . "

= = Track listing = =

= = = 1975 double LP = = =

Side one

" Prelude (Part 1) " ? 22 : 34

Side two

" Prelude (Part 2) " / 3 . " Maiysha " ? 23 : 01

Side three

" Interlude " ? 26 : 17

Side four

" Theme from Jack Johnson " ? 25 : 59

= = = Track notes = = =

All tracks were credited to Miles Davis as the composer .

According to Paul Tingen , track one of the Master Sound edition contains the following compositions performed at the noted times : " Tatu " (0 : 00) and " Agharta Prelude " (22 : 01) ; track three contains " Right Off " (0 : 00) , " So What " (16 : 42) , " Ife " (17 : 23) , and " Wili (= For Dave) " (43 : 11) .

According to Brian Priestley 's discography , appended to Ian Carr 's Miles Davis : A Biography (1982) , the track titles " Interlude " and " Theme from Jack Johnson " were reversed on the disc label 's track listing and liner notes for all editions of Agharta ; " Theme from Jack Johnson " was meant to refer to side three , and " Interlude " to side four .

= = Personnel = =

Credits are adapted from the album 's liner notes .

= = = Musicians = = =

Pete Cosey ? guitar , percussion , synthesizer

Miles Davis ? organ , trumpet

Sonny Fortune ? alto saxophone , flute , soprano saxophone

Al Foster ? drums

Michael Henderson ? bass

Reggie Lucas ? guitar

James Mtume ? congas , percussion , rhythm box , water drum

= = = Production = = =

Takaaki Amano ? assistant engineering

Shigeo Anzai ? photography

John Berg ? artwork (North American release)

Mitsuru Kasai ? assistant engineering

Kiyoshia Koyama ? liner notes

Yoshihiro Kumagai ? liner notes

Teo Macero ? production

Tadayuki Naitoh ? photography

Keiichi Nakamura ? album direction

Tamoo Suzuki ? engineering

Tadanori Yokoo ? artwork

= = Charts = =