

# Reviews:

Jazz's most searing spiritual statement is not John Coltrane's *A Love Supreme* (1964, Impulse!); it was his recording, "Alabama," released a year earlier on *Live at Birdland* (1963, Impulse!). Written in the wake of the Ku Klux Klan's bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham on September 15, 1963, "Alabama" was an improvisation on rage, sorrow, and loss in the cotton-humid climes of the pre-Civil Rights Act Deep South.

Nina Simone addressed the church bombing with much different spiritual tome, "Mississippi Goddam." Simone's offering possessed more heat than Coltrane's but one equally relevant. Simone and Coltrane bravely provided corrosive commentaries on the murders. Now, enter trumpeter Donald Malloy, presenting his own divine inspiration through the medium of jazz.

*Spirituality* is a ten-part tone poem composed and arranged by Malloy for his talented sextet. Malloy funnels the themes of Coltrane and Simone into simple etheric themes that operate in a mantra-like manner. Malloy is no Miles Davis acolyte. While adopting the master's use of space and silence, Malloy opts for the piercing tone of Freddie Hubbard, tempered with Lee Morgan and Donald Byrd. Malloy's solos bristle with energy and a tone like bullets hitting a bell. Tia Fuller's alto and soprano saxophones and flute are a tonal match for Malloy's assertive approach. "UpLift" is brightly updated hard bop with a mild Latin beat pushing Malloy and Fuller through the descending head. Fuller's alto is full-bodied and self-assured. "Oshun" features pianist Michele Rosewoman and vocalist Barbara Barrett, who doubles Fuller's special flute on the theme. Malloy is placed far back as the voice in the wilderness to effect a multi-layered texture.

*Spirituality* is Malloy's answer to Coltrane and Simone, 45 year later, when much distance has been covered—with even more left to go.

**By C. Michael Bailey, All About Jazz**

Donald's debut is one of those musical experiences that takes a few spins to grasp it "concept-wise"... what makes it exciting, though, is the fact his all-original compositions weave (per the cut sheet) "different aspects of Spirit" as seen and perceived through all his life experiences - & that's often hard to execute without overdoing the aspects of one's life to such a degree that the musical talent is obscured. I can tell you that Malloy's skill and verve for playing make it totally seamless, & without any over-statement of one theme or another. His trumpet & flugelhorn do reflect some of the folks he's played with, such as Donald Byrd, but he states his case so clearly that you'll never think you're listening to an artist whose playing just "wants to be" another player... totally his OWN life energy shining through here. I'm really impressed... the group of folks he has assembled here (7 besides

himself) know exactly what he wants in each piece, & spare no energy to take it there. Donald's playing is often out in front, but he seems just as comfortable letting the other instruments take lead as well. My favorite song on this one turned out to be "Oshun"... it pulls together all the players in a near-meditative state... wonderful piano/flute intro that spins off into call and response of universal quality. For something a bit more energetic, you'll also love "Orunmila"... this is one high-steppin' piece, & it really captures Malloy's most soulful moments! After a couple of listens, his communion with the holies will reach right out & wrap you in to his message... excellent jazz in honor of the deities of the Yoruba tribe (Orisha) that gets a MOST HIGHLY RECOMMENDED from me! This is one horn player to keep your ears on - he will rise! Get more information at [www.donaldmalloyjazz.com](http://www.donaldmalloyjazz.com)

**By Rotcod Zzaj, Improvijazzation Nation**

Musicians often seem intimidated when they tackle ultra-heavy topics, but trumpeter Donald Malloy's set of tunes for sextet has a familiar, refreshingly offhand relationship with its heavenly subject matter. Most of the songs are named for orishas - gods or goddesses in Yoruba/Santería tradition - but the music doesn't show much Caribbean or African influence: it's more or less conventional post-bop ("Baba Feruru" has a contemplative opening straight out of mid-60s Shorter). "Nora East" is a ballad, most of the rest is vigorously up tempo ("Orunmila"). Several the tunes are obvious ("On The Path" could almost be a TV theme), but often they're intriguing ("Ibarago"), underpinning elegant solo statements: Tia Fuller on saxes and flute shines particularly brightly, and the leader also makes commanding contributions ("Shango"); guitarist Seth Johnson is too sedate at times. Michele Rosewoman guests on piano on "Oshun"; Barbara Barrett adds vocals to that tune and "Oba." (DBW)

**Wilson and Alroy - Record Reviews**

AUGUSTA, GA - In a stunning debut, Donald Malloy seeks to represent creation through the intersection of the music of the African deities of the Yoruba tribe and jazz. With "Spirituality" listeners are taken on a ride through an emotional expression that explicates the power of creation and originality. Built on a powerful explosion of sound (including two particularly fascinating vocal tracks), "Spirituality" explores the aspects of love, femininity, masculinity, aggression, destiny, and wisdom in the search for the spirit. In this regard, Malloy's first offering is a powerful expression.

Coming from an eclectic approach honed over years of work, "Spirituality" represents Malloy's journey through the world as well as his own soul. This album comes on the heels of graduate study in New Jersey, and offers a collection of spirited compositions. Particular highlights include the smooth forces found in "Ibarago," "Uplift," "Shango" and "On the Path." The only word to capture these sounds is moving, and this becomes even more

apparent in the vocal tracks “Oshun” and “Oba,” which both speak to the powerful intersection of emotion and art.

**BY J. EDWARD SUMERAU, Metro Spirit**

Donald Malloy plays the trumpet like the fine artist he is and should be, and with *Spirituality* (self-released) he creates a journey all his own by not only exploring his own spirituality, but perhaps spirituality as a whole.

The music is not easy as John Coltrane’s *A Love Supreme* tends to be, but what you hear is someone going on his own journey to explore what he’s about and his own ethnic roots. Malloy goes back and forth between the trumpet and the flugelhorn playing in a way that you know you can trust him to take you on his journey. It’s intense but not over the time, and some of it could easily find a home on ECM. With a band that includes Rudy Royston (drums), Tom DiCarlo (bass), Shamie Royston (piano), Tia Fuller (saxophones and flute), and Seth Johnson (guitar), they are equipped to take on the challenges of these songs, then to coat and soothe for maximum relief. Prepare to be moved if you wish to be.

**John Books, This is Book's music #130**

Trumpeter Donald Malloy has just released his first CD, *Spirituality*. All of the album’s compositions were written by Malloy, and each has a strong African feel. He’s joined by Tia Fuller on alto saxophone, soprano saxophone and flute. Malloy’s playing here is introspective and fiery, retaining the music’s soul and purpose.

**Mark Myers, Jazz Wax**

Donald Malloy is a young artist who has successfully navigated his way through his influences and arrived upon his own sound with poise and self-assurance. Indeed, *Spirituality* is an apt title for his debut recording as it imbued with warmth of expression that is deeply personal and sincere.

**Miles Willis, WPFW, Washington D.C**

Don’t wait get a copy of Donald Malloy just had a chance to review it and it’s on the money!!

**John Harris, WPTC Williamsport, PA**

Donald Malloy’s *Spirituality* takes you on a musical journey exploring the sounds of the Diaspora! It Keeps you yearning for more!

**Macellus Shepar, WEAA 89.9 FM**

Malloy does in spades--this guy's compositions arrangements and playing bear monitoring.  
His effort came across as heartfelt and sincere.

**Bruce Tepper, KVMR 89.5 FM**