

PRESTIGE LP 7075
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REMASTERS



THELONIOUS MONK/ SONNY ROLLINS

THELONIOUS MONK piano · SONNY ROLLINS tenor saxophone
JULIUS WATKINS French horn · TOMMY POTTER and PERCY HEATH bass
ARTHUR TAYLOR, ART BLAKEY, and WILLIE JONES drums

1 THE WAY YOU LOOK TONIGHT 5:09
2 I WANT TO BE HAPPY 7:41

3 WORK 5:15
4 NUTTY 5:13
5 FRIDAY THE 13TH 10:31

THELONIOUS MONK'S YEARS as a Prestige recording artist (1952-1954) were tough times for the legendary composer/pianist. Unable to work in New York clubs due to the unjust loss of his cabaret card, and misunderstood when not ignored by listeners as well as many musicians, Monk's profile was sustained primarily by his appearances as both leader and sideman on a series of Prestige sessions released in the then-new LP format. The present collection, which samples three of those sessions, appeared as critics and fans were beginning to catch up to Monk's singular genius and remains one of the best introductions to his iconoclastic brilliance. Three tracks feature leading Monk disciple Sonny Rollins, hitting early peaks on two standards and stretching out on "Friday the 13th," plus a pair of tracks in which Monk's greatest studio trio (with Percy Heath on bass and Art Blakey on drums) introduce the classic "Work" and "Natty."

*I remember the sessions well, I remember how the musicians wanted to sound, and I remember their reactions to the playbacks.
Today, I feel strongly that I am their messenger. —RUDY VAN GELDER*

Recorded by RUDY VAN GELDER at Van Gelder Studio, Hackensack, NJ; October 25 (#1-2), September 22 (3-4), 1954.
(#5) recorded at WOR Studios, New York City, November 13, 1953.

Supervision by BOB WEINSTOCK (#5 by IRA GITLER) Remastering, 2006—Rudy Van Gelder (Van Gelder Studio, Englewood Cliffs, NJ)

All transfers were made from the analog master tapes to digital at 24-bit resolution.

Notes by IRA GITLER • Total Time 34:09

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JULIUS WATKINS French horn TOMMY POTTER and PERCY HEATH bass
ARTHUR TAYLOR, ART BLAKEY, and WILLIE JONES drums

The position of legendary figure is usually reserved for a deceased musician who has played two decades before. It usually requires this posthumous status and span of time for the various stories concerning him to grow into a legend, but it took a very much alive Thelonious Monk only five years to surround himself with an air of mystery and receive the title "High Priest of Bebop" in the Forties. Perhaps this element of weird glamour prevented many people from enjoying Monk's music to the fullest extent. Certainly he is always a low man on the totem pole whenever the triumvirate of the founding fathers of bop is evaluated. This is due in part, no doubt, to the greater solo prowess of Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie, but Thelonious's contributions in time, chord patterns, and the original lines resulting from them were

unjustly minimized. Actually they were the basis for much of the jazz of the Forties and Fifties.

Today he stands as an individual, a highly original musician who is the mentor of many young musicians in New York and the influence of countless others all over the globe. In his writing and playing, he consistently proves his right to the often misapplied title of creator.

November 13, 1953 was a Friday. At WOR Studios preparations were being made for the recording date that would soon commence. Julius Watkins, who had been called in as a last-minute replacement for an ailing Ray Copeland, warmed up in muted tones. Percy Heath and Willie Jones made separate entrances and soon the scheduled two o'clock starting time was clearly indicated by the studio wall clock (a constant

visual magnet at most recording sessions) without there being a sign of Thelonious Monk or Sonny Rollins. Someone half-laughed "Friday the 13th," and there followed much pacing, more clock-watching, and a few phone calls. In the neighborhood of three o'clock, Monk and Sonny arrived. Their cab had rammed the rear of a motorcycle, causing no physical injury but considerably delaying the affairs of the afternoon and adding greatly to the usual anxieties of recording. From then on it was a battle against the red second hand, plus the fact that Julius had not seen the music before, another handicap. Any accomplished musician should have no trouble sight-reading, and Julius didn't, but there was the matter of getting the feel of the tune and its chord changes which is something never to be

achieved with celerity, unless by someone of Charlie Parker's ilk.

"Friday the 13th" was an inevitable title. Its mood seemed to fit the happenings of the day. Everybody reflects a sadness although in different degrees. Sonny, Julius, and Monk each solo at length. Then the three engage in four-bar conversations after which Monk solos again. Drummer Willie Jones solos over and under the final melody statement.

As a belated sequel to Thelonious's successful trio sessions of 1952, this one was also richly rewarding. Though not a great soloist from the standpoint of technique, brilliance, and flash, Monk's originality of style and width of idea serve to make him a highly interesting and important one. His playing can be characterized by roast beef and a martini in which

vermouth plays a very minor and supporting role: much meat and very dry.

The trio often serves as a workshop for Monk's combos with the lines being embellished by Monk for his large group.

"Work" and "Nutty" are thought-provoking themes by Monk that serve as energetic workouts for the trio. Percy is a tower of strength throughout, contributing solos of note on both. Art is always building something while swinging; his solos are delights of rhythmic perfection and imagination and Thelonious is a past master at rhythmic patterns and time sequences.

Almost a year after the "Friday the 13th" session, Monk and Sonny Rollins were reunited on record. Two of the most fertile minds in modern music took two jazz standards and explored them.

THELONIOUS MONK/ SONNY ROLLINS

THE WAY YOU
LOOK TONIGHT
I WANT TO BE HAPPY

WORK
NUTTY
FRIDAY THE 13TH

Sonny was closer to Charlie Parker then (but no imitator) with indications of further development along his own lines clearly shown. Monk, as always, made something extremely personal of the material at hand whether he had written it or not.

Both "The Way You Look Tonight" and "I Want to Be Happy" are swingers with hope and optimism running through them.

—IRA GITLER
original liner notes

I WAS THE ENGINEER on the recording sessions and I also made the masters for the original LP issues of these albums. Since the advent of the CD, other people have been making the masters. Mastering is the final step in the process of creating the sound of the finished product. Now, thanks to the folks at the Concord Music Group who have given me the opportunity to remaster these albums, I can present my versions of the music on CD using modern technology. I remember the sessions well, I remember how the musicians wanted to sound, and I remember their reactions to the playbacks. Today, I feel strongly that I am their messenger. —**RUDY VAN GELDER**

THELONIOUS MONK/ SONNY ROLLINS REVISITED

I produced sessions for Prestige from December 17, 1951 to April 23, 1953, and I have many vivid memories from all of them. There were two times with Monk, one a trio date on December 18, 1952 (my 24th birthday), the other on Friday, November 13, 1953; and four times with Sonny Rollins. Twice he was the leader and twice a sideman, the first with Miles and the second with Monk.

As you can read above in my original notes, November 13, 1953 was not a day that went smoothly. The reason Ray Copeland couldn't make it was a case of the flu. That was true. Monk and Sonny's cab running into the back of a motorcycle could have happened (it was the streets of Manhattan), but without saying it out loud, I really wasn't buying it. On the other hand, I was very happy to see them.

Getting the "heads" played correctly was adding new delays in an already behind-time recording. Progress was

slow. Bob Weinstock, Prestige's president, often told me when I was leaving for the studio to be sure and save tape. If I wasn't satisfied with a take, he instructed me to go back and record over it. This made me uncomfortable. If we had something good, if not great, I was loathe to erase it when what followed might not be superior to the first one. I made it a rule never to tape over a previous, complete take.

Before we got to "Friday the 13th," two other Monk originals were done for the album *Monk* (Prestige 7053). One of them yielded two takes; the other just one. The one-taker came first and when it was completed I asked Monk what it was called. He looked at me through his shades. Rather he looked past me to a fixed point somewhere in infinity and intoned, "Let's call this. . . let's call this. . . . let's call this."

So I named it "Let's Call This."

The second number, of which both takes were issued, also had no known title. Monk's response to my question was more reactive this time. "We'll think of one," he said.

Since he didn't, I called it "Think of One."

By then I had other concerns. It was getting close to 5:00 p.m. Anything past that meant overtime, and if there was anything that could have annoyed Weinstock more than using a second reel of tape, it would have been paying an overtime charge. I wasn't even thinking about issuing both takes of "Think of One" to help fill out the LP, but I knew that if I didn't get some more minutes of music on tape it would not sit well with the home office.

After the number was underway I had a brainstorm: "Get them to stretch out." I didn't want to stop what was already in progress via the intercom. I grabbed a piece of handy cardboard and scrawled on it in as large letters as I could fashion—MORE. Then I opened the door to the studio as carefully as possible and moved slowly across the floor holding the sign high in front of me. After beating a quiet retreat to the control room I looked through the glass and saw that my plan was working.

Unfortunately, the piece was a very short form and although Monk's minimal structures often coaxed inspired invention, at 10:35, despite Rollins's ingenuity and Monk's rhythmic patterns, more life was needed than drummer Willie Jones was breathing into it. I had to do what I had to do, the final part being the inevitable title.

RUDY VAN GELDER REMASTERS

ERIC DOLPHY—Out There (PRCD-8101-2)

GENE AMMONS—Boss Tenor (PRCD-8102-2)

JOHN COLTRANE—Lush Life (PRCD-8103-2)

MILES DAVIS QUINTET—Relaxin' (PRCD-8104-2)

SONNY ROLLINS—Saxophone Colossus (PRCD-8105-2)

COLEMAN HAWKINS—The Hawk Relaxes (PRCD-8106-2)

KENNY BURRELL & JOHN COLTRANE
(PRCD-8107-2)

KENNY DORHAM—Quiet Kenny (PRCD-8108-2)

RED GARLAND—Red Garland's Piano (PRCD-8109-2)

THE MODERN JAZZ QUARTET—Django (PRCD-8110-2)

JOHN COLTRANE—Soultrane (PRCD-30006-2)

ETTA JONES—Don't Go to Strangers (PRCD-30007-2)

MILES DAVIS ALL STARS—Walkin' (PRCD-30008-2)

EDDIE "LOCKJAW" DAVIS—Cookbook, vol. 1 (PRCD-30009-2)

THELONIOUS MONK & SONNY ROLLINS
(PRCD-30010-2)

MOSE ALLISON—Mose Allison Sings (PRCD-30011-2)

YUSEF LATEEF—Eastern Sounds (PRCD-30012-2)

OLIVER NELSON—Screamin' the Blues (PRCD-30013-2)

RICHARD "GROOVE" HOLMES—Soul Message
(PRCD-30014-2)

JACK McDUFF—The Honeydripper (PRCD-30035-2)

SONNY ROLLINS QUARTET—Tenor Madness (PRCD-30044-2)

MILES DAVIS QUINTET—Workin' (PRCD-30080-2)

COLEMAN HAWKINS—At Ease (PRCD-30081-2)

CHARLES EARLAND—Black Talk! (PRCD-30082-2)

ERIC DOLPHY—Outward Bound (PRCD-30083-2)

JACKIE McLEAN—4, 5 and 6 (PRCD-30155-2)

JOHN COLTRANE WITH THE RED GARLAND TRIO—
Traneing In (PRCD-30156-2)

MILES DAVIS QUINTET—Cookin' (PRCD-30157-2)

PAT MARTINO—El Hombre (PRCD-30158-2)

SONNY ROLLINS—Plus Four (PRCD-30159-2)

BOOKER ERVIN—The Freedom Book (PRCD-30160-2)

ROLAND KIRK WITH JACK McDUFF—Kirk's Work
(PRCD-30161-2)

**ROY HAYNES/PHINEAS NEWBORN/
PAUL CHAMBERS**—We Three (PRCD-30162-2)

TADD DAMERON WITH JOHN COLTRANE—
Mating Call (PRCD-30163-2)

THELONIOUS MONK TRIO (PRCD-30164-2)

1 THE WAY YOU LOOK TONIGHT
(Fields-Kern) Aldi Music Co./Universal-Polygram Int'l-ASCAP 5:09

2 I WANT TO BE HAPPY
(Caesar-Yaumans) Warner Bros. Music/WB Music-ASCAP 7:41

3 WORK 5:15

4 NUTTY 5:13

5 FRIDAY THE 13TH 10:31

All selections composed by Thelonious Monk
(Thelonious Music-BMI), except as indicated.

ON #1-2:
SONNY ROLLINS **tenor saxophone**
THELONIOUS MONK **piano**
TOMMY POTTER **bass**
ARTHUR TAYLOR **drums**
Recorded in Hackensack, NJ; October 25, 1954.

#3-4:
THELONIOUS MONK **piano**
PERCY HEATH **bass**
ART BLAKEY **drums**
Recorded in Hackensack; September 22, 1954.

#5:
THELONIOUS MONK **piano**
SONNY ROLLINS **tenor saxophone**
JULIUS WATKINS **French horn**
PERCY HEATH **bass**
WILLIE JONES **drums**
Recorded at WOR Studios, New York City; November 13, 1953.



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RUDY VAN GELDER REMASTERS

