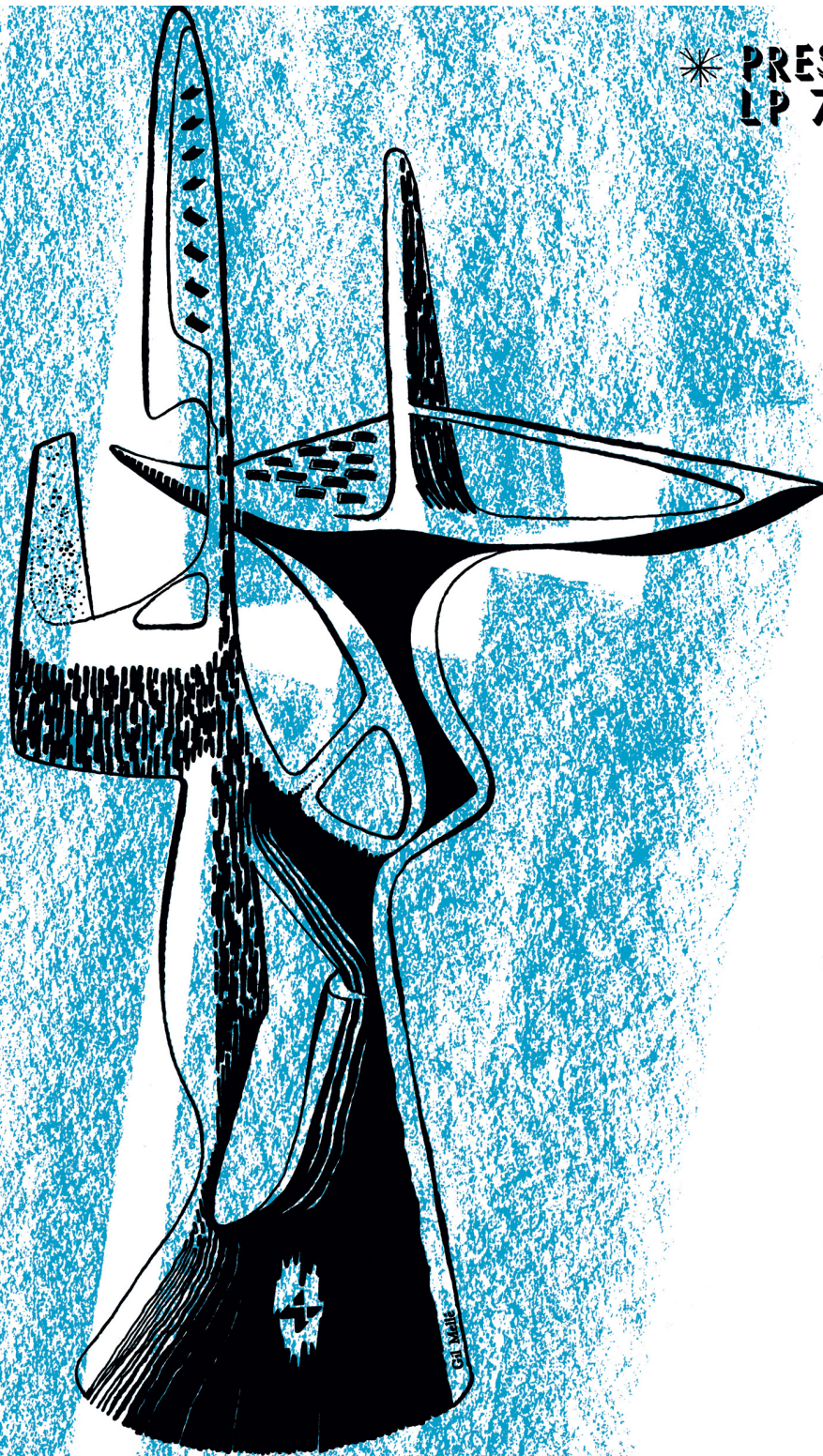


* PRESTIGE
LP 7027

thelonious



MONK

THELONIOUS MONK TRIO

THELONIOUS MONK piano GARY MAPP bass or PERCY HEATH bass

ART BLAKEY drums or MAX ROACH drums

1 BLUE MONK 7:36
2 JUST A GIGOLO 2:59
3 BEMSHA SWING 3:08
4 REFLECTIONS 2:46
5 LITTLE ROOTIE TOOTIE 3:04

6 SWEET AND LOVELY 3:33
7 BYE-YA 2:44
8 MONK'S DREAM 3:05
9 TRINKLE, TINKLE 2:47
10 THESE FOOLISH THINGS 2:45



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

Tracks #5, 6, 7, 8—Supervision by TEACHO WILTSHIRE. Recorded October 15, 1952.

Tracks #3, 4, 9, 10—Supervision by IRA GITLER. Recorded December 18, 1952.

Tracks #1, 2—Supervision by BOB WEINSTOCK. Recorded September 22, 1954.

Recording engineers—RUDY VAN GELDER, Van Gelder Studio, Hackensack, NJ ("Blue Monk" and "Just a Gigolo" only);

LES CAHAN (October 15) or IRV GREEN (December 18) at Beltone Studios, New York City (other selections)

Remastering, 2007—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

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THELONIOUS MONK

THELONIOUS MONK piano GARY MAPP bass or PERCY HEATH bass
ART BLAKEY drums or MAX ROACH 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 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.

This album is composed of two separate sessions. The first four were taped on October 15, 1952; Thelonious Monk, piano; Gary

Mapp, bass; Art Blakey, drums. The last four were made on December 18, 1952 with Max Roach on drums in place of Blakey.

"Little Rootie Tootie" is a sort of train song with Monk even punctuating to represent the whistle.

"Sweet and Lovely" is marvelously interpreted by Monk. His playing cannot be typed. It is jazz but not particularly of any era.

"Bye-Ya" is a rhythmically Latin romp with Blakey's sticks complementing and driving Monk simultaneously.

"Monk's Dream" has the undertone of a nightmare running through it. The bridge especially seems to echo this feeling.

"Trinkle, Tinkle" does just

THELONIOUS MONK TRIO

BLUE MONK
JUST A GIGOLO
BEMSHA SWING
REFLECTIONS
LITTLE ROOTIE TOOTIE

SWEET AND LOVELY
BYE-YA
MONK'S DREAM
TRINKLE, TINKLE
THESE FOOLISH THINGS

that with its shimmering clusters of notes much like stars and silver bells.

"These Foolish Things" is another example of the unique way Thelonious lends his style to a standard. Notice the humorous "Please Mr. Sun" introduction.

"Bemsha Swing" is the joint composition of Monk and Denzil Best. Max Roach gets a chance for some interesting interplay with Monk.

"Reflections" is a beautiful set of musings. Monk can be very moving in his direct simplicity.

Thelonious Monk, piano; Percy Heath, bass; Art Blakey, drums. Recorded September 22, 1954.

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 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 larger group.

"Blue Monk" is a plaintive wail (dictionary meaning intended but take it anyway you want to) in which Monk conjugates the blues in a curious combination of several elements and eras of jazz. Percy Heath solos with intelligence and warmth and Art Blakey constructs a solo as only he can.

"Just a Gigolo" is more than that. He becomes a wistful character with depth as Monk describes him in one of his finest solo performances.

—IRA GITLER

*These notes
appeared on the
original album liner.*

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 TRIO REVISITED

I'M SURE I HEARD MONK'S NAME sometime in 1945 but I don't think I really became aware of him until he began recording for Blue Note in 1947. His most famous piece, "Round Midnight," had been recorded by Cootie Williams's Orchestra in August of 1944 but I'm fairly certain I didn't become aware of it until after Dizzy Gillespie waxed it (as they used to say) for Dial in Los Angeles, February 1946. I certainly didn't become fully cognizant of the 1944 sides he made with Coleman Hawkins for the Joe Davis label until after Monk had recorded as a leader. I may have heard them on the radio but Monk didn't fully register with me.

It would have been possible to have heard Monk at the Spotlite when he was a member of Gillespie's orchestra in 1946. I had been at the club in late February to catch Diz's sextet (Leo Parker, Milt Jackson, Al Haig, Ray Brown, and Stan Levey) and write my first published article on jazz for my high school paper. The Spotlite management had already planned that Gillespie would expand to a full-sized orchestra a couple of months down the road. Monk was the band's first pianist but I didn't hear them right away and by the time I did John Lewis had replaced him.

In the same general period I remember seeing a large advertising board leaning against the wall near the entrance to the Famous Door (a club on the same side of the street as the Spotlite) that listed Thonium Monk as one of the musicians performing that night.

The Blue Notes were an ear-opener. Through Dizzy's group's recording and big band's live performance I already was in love with "Round Midnight," but the composer's recording with his own arrangement of this hauntingly beautiful melody was a revelation. Here it was titled "Round About Midnight." It became a revered piece of music around the world, recorded well over 1,000 times including one exotic version with French lyrics by a group called Les Nubians. In Robert Rauschenberg's 1955 collage *Monk*, a portion of the label from the 78 of "Round About Midnight" can be seen.

I first heard him live at the Royal Roost in 1948, leading a quartet with Milt Jackson as one of his sidemen. Monk and Bags, as Jackson was called by his fellow musicians, were extremely compatible musically. It was being said at the time that Monk was difficult to play with but that Jackson was the exception. One night I heard tenorman Wardell Gray sit in with them and break down that canard some more.

My association with Prestige Records really began after I returned to New York from the University of Missouri in 1950. Bob Weinstock had started New Jazz in 1949 and added the Prestige label before the end of the year. I had met him through a mutual friend in 1948 when I was home on summer vacation from college. We hit it off through our strong interests in jazz and sports. As a result I clerked for him for two weeks at the counter space he had rented in the Jazz Record Center, a second-story retail loft on West 47th Street (I incorrectly identified it as West 48th in my notes to *The Best of Sonny Rollins*.) During the remainder of my time in Columbia, Missouri I was a customer of Bob's mail-order business, receiving packages of Prestige, New Jazz, Savoy, and Blue Notes from the Jazz Record Corner, his own loft on 8th Avenue off 50th Street, opposite the Madison Square Garden that preceded the present arena of that name.

In the fall of 1950, having failed to connect as a writer with either *Metronome* or *Down Beat*, the two major jazz magazines of that time, I went to work for Prestige at its new location on 10th Avenue between 50th and 51st Streets. I did it all, from packing records, sweeping the floor, picking up 78s from the many local distributors of the labels Weinstock needed for his continuing mail-order business, and doing promotional work with the jazz deejays.

In August 1951 I got my chance to write more than label copy and publicity for magazine ads when Bob decided to put liner notes on the back of the 17th album in the new 10-inch LP series. By December, suffering burn-out, he suddenly handed his role as studio producer to me, beginning with Sonny Rollins's first date as a leader on the 17th.

He hired pianist/band leader Teacho Wilshire to do sessions with vocalists and r&b instrumentalists. Teacho also did the initial trio

session of the newly-signed Thelonious Monk in October 1952. I was delegated to do the second trio recording, three months later, on December 18, my 24th birthday.

Both sessions were recorded at Beltone (I believe it was in the West 40s) that Prestige used between Apex, on West 57th Street, its original studio of choice, and WOR, at 1440 Broadway, just south of Times Square, where I did the first Modern Jazz Quartet date on December 22nd, four days after Monk trio #2.

The man who ran Beltone was Les Cahan and I think he engineered the first of the two Monk sessions. For the second, Les's assistant, Irv Green, was in charge of the control room. I can still see him greeting Monk as the latter entered the studio. "Irv," the short fellow with glasses said, proffering his hand. "Thelonious," replied the tall, imposing Monk as he took and shook it. It wasn't Stanley and Livingstone but it was quite a vignette. You had to be there.

In this CD pieces from three different sessions are intermixed without adherence to when they were recorded but I prefer to comment on them chronologically.

For the first date Monk was joined by bassist Gary Mapp and drummer Art Blakey. I once wrote something to the effect that Blakey punctuated Monk's rhythmic grammar like no one else. Max Roach, who also could inventively interact with Monk (as he had shown with Monk's 6/4 version of "Carolina Moon" for Blue Note in May of 1952 and "Bemsha Swing" here) replaced Blakey on trio session two.

When I wrote the notes for a 10-inch *Monk* LP, I pointed out that Mapp was a policeman in Brooklyn. This got him into trouble at the station house. If I had known this I wouldn't have mentioned it but I don't think he was thrown off the force.

Titles of Monk tunes often yield interesting stories. His train song, "Little Rootie Tootie," was named for his, then, about-to-be-3-year-old son, Thelonious Sphere Monk, Jr. or "Toot," as he was also known. Toot grew up to be T.S. Monk, drumming with his father before eventually becoming a leader of his own group and founding the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz.

Weinstock wanted to call the Latinate "Bye-Ya" "Go," but in Spanish. He asked George Rivera, his accountant, who was of Puerto Rican descent, to translate for him. George said, "Vaya" and because the v and the b are pronounced similarly, Bob heard "Bye-Ya" and that was that.

For the session in which I was in the booth, Monk wanted to do "Bemsha Swing," a number from the Forties he had collaborated on with drummer/composer Denzil Best. The only problem was that although it had never been recorded, it already had a publisher—Bayes Music—and Weinstock would only agree to record it if he got a "rate" from the publisher. By the time we began the session there had been no concessions from Bayes but I liked the song enough to call Bob. He was at his health club, located at the Park Central Hotel. I had them get him out of the swimming pool and convinced him to pay the standard agreement.

As for "Trinkle, Tinkle," Monk gave me his title through clenched teeth and so I didn't hear "Twinkle Twinkle" or make the connection when he added, "like a star." I guess my mind was too focused on other aspects of the session.

A few days later, listening to the test pressings, I named "Reflections" because that's the way Monk's ruminations hit me. When he recorded it in France, two years later, it was called "Portrait of an Eremit" (hermit) by Henri Renaud.

The two selections from his September 22, 1954 Prestige date that do not appear here, but are available on *Thelonious Monk/Sonny Rollins*, which has also been released in the RVG series (PRCD-30010-2), are "Work" and "Nutty." Here we have "Blue Monk" named by Weinstock (it was the beginning of his titling with "Blue" for other Prestige musicians' pieces—"Blue Gene" by Ammons and "Blue Mo" by Elmo Hope, for example).

"Blue Monk" became popular with fans and other musicians, and is often called at jam sessions to this day. "Just a Gigolo," as a piano solo, was in a separate category from Monk's trio renditions of standards like "Sweet and Lovely" and "These Foolish Things" in this CD. When he played solo, later on, there were more ancient standards such as "Sweetheart of All My Dreams." Trio or solo, he certainly reinvented them.

It has been duly noted that the piano used for the December 18, 1952 session was out of tune. The upper register was especially tinny. In an article on Monk in *PM*, a progressive daily New York paper published between 1940 and 1948, writer Ira Peck reported that Monk "has also refused to play at clubs simply because he felt the piano was out of tune."

Peck then quoted someone who related: "Once right in the middle of a number he stopped, got up from the piano, and walked away. 'The B note rings,' he said. 'It disturbs me.'"

Obviously Monk chose to ignore the toy-piano ringing on that afternoon. No one else in the studio, including yours truly, raised any objections. Why, I can't tell you, but like the blind genius, Art Tatum, who would walk into a bar, sit down at the keyboard, find all the bad or non-working notes and then avoid them during his performance, Monk made the piano work for him.

He was one of a kind whose singular talent appreciates in value every day.

—IRA GITLER
JANUARY 2007

-
- 1 BLUE MONK** 7:36
 - 2 JUST A GIGOLO**
(Caesar-Casucci-Brammer) Chappell & Co./WB Music Corp.-ASCAP/
G.E.M.A. 2:59
 - 3 BEMSHA SWING**
(Monk-Best) Second Floor Music-BMI 3:08
 - 4 REFLECTIONS** 2:46
 - 5 LITTLE ROOTIE TOOTIE** 3:04
 - 6 SWEET AND LOVELY**
(Lemare-Arnheim-Tobias) Anne-Rachel Music/Range Road Music/
Harry Tobias Music/Jerry Leiber Music/Mike Stoller Music-ASCAP 3:33
 - 7 BYE-YA** 2:44
 - 8 MONK'S DREAM** 3:05
 - 9 TRINKLE, TINKLE** 2:47
 - 10 THESE FOOLISH THINGS**
(Marvell-Strachey-Link) Bourne Co.-ASCAP 2:45

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

"Little Rootie Tootie," "Sweet and Lovely," "Bye-Ya," "Monk's Dream": Thelonious Monk—piano;
Gary Mapp—bass; Art Blakey—drums. Supervision by Teacho Wiltshire. Recorded October 15,
1952.

"Trinkle, Tinkle," "These Foolish Things," "Bemsha Swing," "Reflections": Thelonious Monk—
piano; Gary Mapp—bass; Max Roach—drums. Supervision by Ira Gitler. Recorded December 18,
1952.

"Blue Monk," "Just a Gigolo":
Thelonious Monk—piano; Percy Heath—bass; Art Blakey—drums.
Supervision by Bob Weinstock. Recorded September 22, 1954.

Recording engineers—RUDY VAN GELDER, Van Gelder Studio, Hackensack, NJ ("Blue Monk" and
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