CDP 7 46429 2
5100X 985

INDESTRUCTIBLE!
ART BLAKEY
AND THE JAZZ MESSENGERS

LEE MORGAN, trumpet; CURTIS FULLER, trombone;
WAYNE SHORTER, tenor sax; CEDAR WALTON, piano;
REGINALD WORKMAN, bass; ART BLAKEY, drums.

1 **THE EGYPTIAN**
(Curtis Fuller) 10:25

2 **SORTIE**
(Curtis Fuller) 8:13

3 **CALLING MISS KHADIJA**
(Lee Morgan) 7:21

4 **WHEN LOVE IS NEW**
(Cedar Walton) 6:01

5 **MR. JIN**
(Wayne Shorter) 7:05

6 **IT'S A LONG WAY DOWN***
(Wayne Shorter) 5:26

Produced by Alfred Lion
Produced for release by Michael Cuscuna
Recorded by Rudy Van Gelder
Recorded on April 15, 1964 (#6)
April 24, 1964 (#4)
May 13, 1964 (#1, 2, 3 & 5)
Original Transfer by Ron McMaster
*Does not appear on L.P. configuration
Total Time: 44:30

Wayne Shorter's *It's A Long Way Down* was first recorded for this album, but remained unissued until a Japanese Blue Note release (GXF 3060) in the late seventies. Its title comes from one of the typically folksy and absurd favorite phrases of a Republican US president in the fifties. Historically the seventies should bring a wealth of jazz compositions titled out of societal ignorance. This session, for which Lee Morgan re-entered the Jazz Messengers after the departure of his replacement Freddie Hubbard, is one of the finest and most underrated in the Jazz Messenger's discography.

– MICHAEL CUSCUNA

The classic Blue Note albums which span the mid 1950's to late 1960's were recorded directly on to two track analog tape. No multitrack recording was used and consequently no mixing was required. Therefore, this CD was made by transferring the one step analog master to digital.

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COMPACT DISC DIGITAL AUDIO

STEREO

BLUE NOTE

INDESTRUCTIBLE

Lee Morgan / Curtis Fuller / Wayne Shorter / Cedar Walton / Reginald Workman

& the Jazz Messengers ART BLAKEY



THE WORDS right next to "indestructible" in Roget's Thesaurus are: undying, imperishable, indelible, ineradicable, indeciduous.

I wasn't sure about the last one, but after checking with Webster and finding it meant evergreen, like leaves, I realized how, along with all the other adjectives in the set, it applied to Art Blakey. All these words, appropriately, were part of a section of the Thesaurus entitled "Stability."

Stability is a fine word to bring up when an Art Blakey record is on the turntable, or when recollections of his work are the topic under discussion. In the literal sense, his stability as a timekeeper and rhythm section generator has earned him the admiration of musicians from Tokyo to Teheran. In a more general sense, the constancy and reliability of his performances, and of the groups he has led during the past decade, have earned him every laudatory word that has been printed in every language that has ever run a Blakey review.

All of us, I suppose, have our special feelings about the Blakey group we prefer, or the sidemen we favor, among the long list of great talents he has brought to the public ear. The choice is difficult, for each edition of the Messengers in its particular way has had a personal quality of special value, depending largely on the personalities of the principal soloists. To name just a few, the saxophonists have included Jackie McLean, Benny Golson and Hank Mobley; the trumpeters Clifford Brown, Donald Byrd, Kenny Dorham and Freddie Hubbard; the pianists Horace Silver and Bobby Timmons.

On this record, though, you will hear a Blakey sound that ranks for me among the most compelling of all: the group for which Blakey switched from quintet to sextet format.

Don De Micheal, reviewing the new step-up just four years ago in *Down Beat*, augured the general reaction: "This latest edition of the Messengers promises to be the most interesting of them all... the addition of trombone to Blakey's usual trumpet-tenor front line not only adds another soloist, but gives the ensemble passages the depth and color impossible to obtain with only two horns." He went on to point out that Wayne Shorter, as musical director of the group, was using arrangements that fully utilized the possibilities inherent in a three-horn line-up.

This is the group you hear on *Indestructible!*, a set of five original works (written by four different members of the group) that display the sextet's virtues at optimum level.

Mood-setting is one of Blakey's special personal talents. He's into it right from the first moments of *The Egyptian*, establishing an ominous Charleston-beat figure that fixes the atmosphere; then Cedar Walton takes it up before the melody, an A-Minor unison theme, is introduced by the horns. Notice particularly the contrasting simplicity of the 16-bar release, which keeps riding up and down on five notes: B-C-D-E-F, F-E-D-C-B, the horns voiced, before the initial unison line returns.

Though the rhythmic pattern of the introduction keeps recurring, the performance has all the variety one expects of a Blakey performance, achieved through backgrounds for the solos, and through the constant inventiveness of the soloists themselves. Fuller is at peak form; Lee Morgan gets his teeth into the theme and never lets go; Cedar Walton is dually effective as composer and soloist.

Sortie, like *The Egyptian*, is a Curtis Fuller original. The title can mean an exit or a military expedition; I lean to the latter interpretation. There is a long introduction, first by Cedar and then by the horns, before the line is introduced. Later, while the horns are holding those whole notes, Blakey adds greatly to the atmosphere with the suggestion of 12/8 in his dynamic support. Lee tells his story beautifully, with variety in his melodic contours and long, flowing phrases. Blakey feeds Shorter while the latter pleads and wails in his solo, using a tone that could best be described as "flat" if that word were not usually interpreted to mean out of tune. Wayne's sound is flat in the sense of not sharp or sonorous. After Curtis' solo, which has touches of J.J., there is some intriguing interplay between Art and Cedar during the latter's sortie. The final ensemble statement is tagged by an A Flat chord that never resolves to the expected D Flat.

Lee Morgan's *Calling Miss Khadija* opens with the valiant, dependable Reggie Workman playing a riff in 6/4, on which he is soon joined by the piano and then also by drums. The horns tightly voiced, this is now revealed to be a tense and fascinating blues, with Lee equally successful as composer and soloist. Wayne refutes the allegations that he has jumped on John's Trane; he is his own man, and is as recognizable as just about any tenor player in jazz today. Curtis' groove is gut-level blues. Cedar, during a lithe solo, trades twos with the horns. Then Art goes to work with sticks, snares and hi-hat, for one of his less complex but none the less attention-retaining solos, before subsiding to let Workman return with the original 6/4 figure, leading to the reprise of the theme.

When Love Is New, composed by Cedar Walton, lives up to the title's implication of an air of young, fresh romance. Except for a 16-bar interlude by Lee Morgan, this is Wayne's solo throughout, with tranquil support by the other horns and by the composer. At times there is a feeling to this melody reminiscent of a Billy Strayhorn mood, and I can hardly think of a greater tribute than this to Cedar's melodic talent. Again we are reminded that the Messengers can be a strikingly effective ballad group.

Mr. Jin, introduced with a characteristically dramatic Blakey flourish, is what might best be called an Orient-oriented composition. The staccato manner in which the horns play most of the notes in their opening phrases helps to establish this exotic flavor. Wayne and Lee both have room to stretch out here before those stabbing ensemble notes come back.

And there you have five new views of the indestructible Mr. Blakey. To recommend the album is superfluous. Whether writing record reviews or playing a new release on the air, I have never yet had occasion to react negatively to a Blakey album. I hope he remains indestructible along with the immutably youthful jazz spirit he represents, for many, many years to come.

– LEONARD FEATHER

(Author of "The Book of Jazz From Then Till Now," Horizon)

THE FINEST IN JAZZ SINCE 1939
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