

SAM MOST

"Plays Bird, Bud, Monk & Miles"



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HYDE/HANNAN

Foreword & Notes From
Original Vinyl Release

SAM MOST

It's a fairly safe guess that in years to come the names of Charlie Parker, Bud Powell, Thelonious Monk and Miles Davis will induce a reverential ring for that generation just as Emmett Hardy, Buddy Bolden and Joe "King" Oliver do in ours. .

The twin advantages that our latter-day saints have on their predecessors are the improvements in recording techniques and the interest of men like Sam Most in perpetuating their memory.

It may seem strange to speak of glorification of men who, with one exception, are still an integral part of the creative music mold. The fact is, however, that we are some 17 years into the neo-Minton's era which, relatively speaking, calls for a second look at some of its extraordinary contributors.

In the slightly more than two years since his death, the name and accomplishments of Charlie "Bird" Parker have become almost Bunyanesque. Not only his revolutionary alto playing, which has become an indisputable standard for today's neophytes, but his brilliantly conceived riffs and melodies, which are guaranteed immortality. "Bird" had "a way with a tune" that continues to astound the most seasoned jazz fan.

To greater or lesser extents, the same is true of Bud Powell and Thelonious Monk, who have thoroughly altered the concept of jazz piano; and of Miles Davis whose style of introverted trumpeting has been sheer delight for more than a decade. As a by-product of their collective talents, these men have fashioned some of the most refreshingly original jazz lines ever heard.

As a musician, Sam Most is ever alert to the need of broadening the vistas of jazz. Hitting upon the format of this LP, he resolved to present two compositions by each man in totally different settings. Half the LP is given to a big band with many soloists; the rest is a small, intimate group, which so readily lends itself to the spontaneity of jazz.

Selecting an arranger for the big band sides was of paramount importance in the preparation of this LP. Most felt that the sextet items would run off by themselves with little difficulty, but the 16-piece aggregation needed the skill of a man who fully understood the nature of

the compositions and the musicians engaged to perform them.

Thus Bob Dorough was selected, not alone to pen the charts, but to act as pianist/conductor for the sessions. In this capacity, he literally ran the show, and the vitality of these sides is the direct result of his sound musicianship.

As the personnel box shows, only one major change was affected in the transition from big band to small group. This was a division of the bass chores between Oscar Pettiford in the big unit; Tommy Potter in the sextet. Otherwise, as our track analysis will show, the bulk of the solos were covered by half a dozen men. It is also significant that Sam Most (a pioneer in jazz flute), played clarinet exclusively on this date for the singular purpose of lending complete depth to the compositions selected.

I have chosen to classify the tracks according to composer, rather than in chronological sequence, so that the listener may compare the original lines as phrased for the big band and the sextet. Taken in the order of our title, Bird, Bud, Monk and Miles, the breakdown is as follows:

CHARLIE PARKER - "Bluebird" is one of the most provocative blues lines ever fashioned, and Sam sets the mood over the rhythm section with the reeds echoing the theme. The lengthy clarinet solo gives Sam a chance to utilize the drive of the larger unit. He is followed by Davey Schildkraut's tenor, Frank Rehak's trombone and Marty Flax' baritone which cuts across the trombone line and continues through sharply accented brass figures. Doug Mettome on trumpet has the last full chorus before the reeds take up the challenging task of duplicating Parker's original solo from his record of the tune. Sam returns for the nostalgic close.

In "Confirmation" the sextet follows the line in unison, building to Sam's Jeannie-with-the-light-brown-hair invention. Doug Mettome, Davey Schildkraut and Bob Dorough contrib-

ute in order. The ensemble breaks briefly for Tommy Potter in the final lap.

BUD POWELL - "Strictly Confidential" is a lilting opus, which features Harmon mutes in the first chorus. Dick Meldonian on alto and Marty Flax take full advantage of the loose rhythm pattern, followed in order by Ed Wasserman on tenor, a fours exchange by trombonists Rehak and Dahl, and Doug Mettome's emotional trumpet. Pianist Dorough and bassist Pettiford sneak through before the close.

"Celia" is more typically Powell as the riff indicates. Mettome and Schildkraut precede Sam's leaping clarinet, with Dorough and drummer Paul Motian finding an opening thereafter.

THELONIOUS MONK - "'Round (About) Midnight" is certainly Monk's most famous composition, and this superb arrangement catches the basic mood of the piece. Solo-wise it is exclusively Sam's side as he interpolates over the polytonal and poly-rhythmic score. The bluesy mood is permanently sustained.

"In Walked Bud" is Monk's musician and semantic tribute to the inventive Mr. Powell. Schildkraut, Mettome, Motian and Potter make early contributions before Sam's driving passages.

MILES DAVIS - "Serpent's Tooth" is a fine demonstration of the big band in full bloom. Sam, Doug Mettome, and Ed Wasserman reflect its generative effect in their free-wheeling conceptions. Sam leads an extraordinary 4's exchange with the band, Marty Flax, the brass section, Frank Rehak, the reeds and Dick Meldonian all taking part. Dorough puts his 16-bar stamp of approval on before the roaring finish.

"Half Nelson" by the sextet completes the balance of tunes with savory passages by Schildkraut and Mettome. Sam blends neatly with the churning rhythm section, giving way briefly to Bob Dorough before concluding.

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"SAM MOST PLAYS BIRD, BUD, MONK & MILES"



In retrospect, this disc offers a permanency beyond the musical gems captured therein. With the assistance of other musical minds and talents, Sam Most has completed a dedicatory volume which chronicles for posterity some of the major jazz contributions of our era. Your approbation is the final chapter.

- JOE QUINN

- 1. STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL (Powell)
- 2. HALF NELSON (Davis)
- 3. 'ROUND MIDNIGHT (Hanighen-Monk-Williams)
- 4. IN WALKED BUD (Monk)
- 5. SERPENT'S TOOTH (Davis)
- 6. CELIA (Powell)
- 7. CONFIRMATION (Parker)
- 8. BLUEBIRD (Parker)

PERSONNEL

SAM MOST AND HIS ORCHESTRA: Songs 1,3,5,8

REEDS	TRUMPETS
SAM MOST - Clarinet	CHARLES HARMON
ED WASSERMAN	AL STEWART
DICK MELDONIAN	DON STRATTON
DAVID SCHILDKRAUT	ED REIDER, III
MARTY FLAX	DOUG METTOME

TROMBONES

BILL ELTON	BOB DOROUGH - Piano
JIM DAHL	OSCAR PETTIFORD - Bass
FRANK REHAK	PAUL MOTIAN - Drums

SAM MOST AND HIS SEXTET: Songs 2,4,6,7

SAM MOST - Clarinet	BOB DOROUGH - Piano
DOUG METTOME - Trumpet	TOMMY POTTER - Bass
DAVID SCHILDKRAUT - Tenor	PAUL MOTIAN - Tenor

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