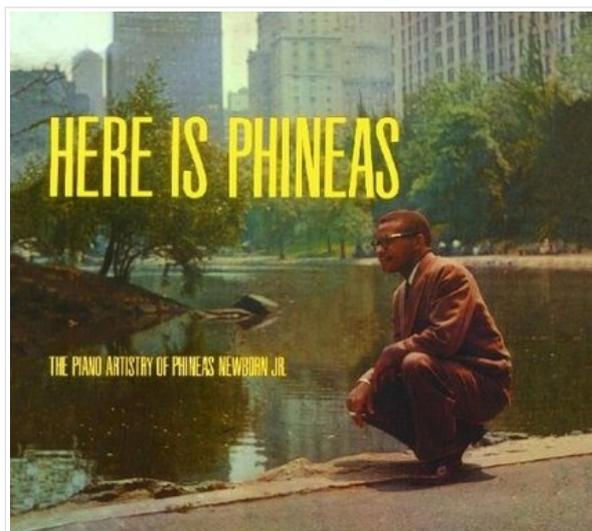




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PHNEAS NEWBORN - Here Is Phineas: The Piano Artistry Of Phineas Newborn

Atlantic 1235 Available from
www.speakerscornerrecords.com

Phineas Newborn Jr (p); Calvin Newborn (g); Oscar Pettiford (b); Kenny Clarke (d)

Recorded NYC May 1956

This attractive re-issue is presented with a reproduction of the original cover design as originally issued. This was the first leader date by Newborn who was causing quite a stir at the time due to his phenomenal technique at the keyboard. The opening track Barbados swings mightily and it must be said that Newborn is inventive in his improvised choruses even if the focus is mainly on his ability to play at lightning tempi. All The Things You Are begins with a long out of tempo introduction on piano where Phineas comes on like a bop-oriented Art Tatum. The More I see You is a piano solo where once again the emphasis is on the piano technique of this gifted musician. He was much criticized at the time of

this release for concentrating on that technique to the exclusion of all else, but I found his improvised lines here were always interesting and original. The same must be said for Newport Blues, another piano solo without backing where he is working at slow tempo most of the time. The thing is though that Phineas didn't really do slow, so this blues is often catapulted into double time as he works through it. Newborn's version of Celia here must surely have had even composer Bud Powell sitting up and listening intently.

Dahoud, the Clifford Brown line and Afternoon In Paris the John Lewis composition are particularly well done with strong support from Pettiford and Clarke, two of the very best rhythm players at this time. Both add immeasurably to the success of this album although Calvin Newborn, the pianist's guitarist brother is virtually unheard in the mix. I can only assume he was playing lightweight acoustic rhythm guitar in the section. Generally, though the recording is particularly good, an early stereo taping by Rudy Van Gelder at a date when two channel discs were almost unheard of. Newborn's session is a mainly up-tempo swinger where even the ballads go faster but it is an enjoyable set and it is good to see it back, in its original format on LP. The all analogue mastering by Speakers-Corner Records is an added bonus.

Reviewed by Derek Ansell

ECM 50 TOUCHSTONES

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