

Charles Mingus The Clown

180g vinyl

Speakers Corner



ORIGINALLY RELEASED BY Atlantic Records back in 1957, *The Clown* finds bassist and composer Charles Mingus near the height of his considerable powers. His work with

Charlie Parker might be why he was among the few of his generation to carry the spirit of joy into the bebop era and though he always took music seriously, he never really felt the need to challenge his audience like some undoubtedly did. *The Clown* opens with *Haitian Fight Song* which is vibrant with saxophone, trombone and

piano next to the rhythm section, and builds to a climax with a fluctuating tempo before hitting a final high that is pure gospel. *Blue Cee* is blues that's powered by a delightful groove with an upbeat vibe where the trombone serenades rather than blasts.

Reincarnation Of A Lovebird is an homage to Parker and really swings after its erratic start while the title track is narrated by Jean Shepherd and tells the sad story of a clown who tries to spread happiness but only gets laughs when he trips up. A reflection, perhaps, of the way Mingus felt about his audiences. The sound has limited dynamics and bandwidth, but makes up for it with energy and the genius of the works and the playing. **JK**