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Elvin Jones – Midnight Walk – Speakers Corner Records

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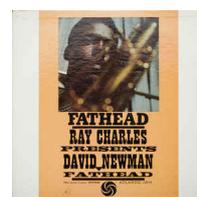
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**Elvin Jones – Midnight Walk –
Atlantic Records SD 1485
(1966)/Speakers Corner
Records (2019) 180-gram
stereo vinyl, 36:03 *****:**



**Pure
Pleasure /
Speakers
Corner**



(Elvin Jones – drums; Thad Jones – trumpet; Hank Mobley – tenor

saxophone; Dollar Brand – piano; Donald Moore – bass; Steve James – electric piano; George Abend Percussion)

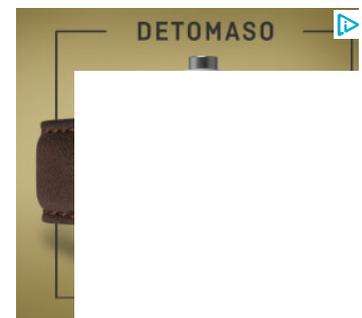
Speakers Corner has released a 180-gram vinyl re-mastering of Jones' seminal 1966 Atlantic recording, *Midnight Walk*. With an all-star ensemble (Thad Jones/trumpet; Hank Mobley/tenor; Dollar Brand/piano; Donald Moore/double bass; Steve James/electric piano and George Abend/percussion), the drummer leads a hard-driving post-bop celebration. Side One opens with a stirring title cut. The track kicks off with a group vamp, then Brother Thad takes the first solo. His crystalline, no-vibrato trumpet sparkles with blues intonation. Mobley adds some muscle on tenor before handing it off to Brand. His unique style appears to balance symmetrical lines with quasi-atonal shading. Drummer Jones executes nimble drum fills before the ensemble reengages on the verse. Adding electric piano (Stephen James) brings a new element to the arrangement on "Lycra Too?". Composer James' intro is like pre-1970's funk. As trumpet and sax deliver a large ensemble resonance. Jones keeps everything connected with his propulsive integrity. Thad Jones and Mobley respectively deliver saucy and textured solos. James' groove-infused licks complement the traditional instrumental spotlight. Pianist Dollar Brand shines on his own song, "Tintiyana". His genre-bending piano "overture" has shades of *modal structure*, with gospel and even classical overtones. Trumpet and sax runs are framed by a Sunday-rousing piano and ensuing solo. Jones' inimitable polyrhythmic drumming sustains the jam with subtle tension. On Hank Mobley's lone writing contribution, "H.M. On F.M.", a freewheeling almost bebop feel accelerates when the trumpeter swings with passion. Mobley slides in without any break in contextual momentum. Brand's right hand notation is stellar and bassist Donald Moore percolates as a well-timed drum solo/break puts a definitive up tempo focus on the dynamics.

Side Two is notable for a pair of Thad Jones compositions. On "Cross Purpose" a bop swing framework unleashes the initial trumpet solo. Jones embraces a piercing elegance in an extended run. He manages to push the instrumental tonality without any shrillness. Mobley follows suit as the piano, bass and drum encompass old school jazz manipulation. Elvin never lets up, joining the group in lockstep tempo or guiding them into new rhythmic territory. In a brilliant sequence, the drummer exchanges with his brother and Mobley with his uncanny deft timing. When everyone circles back, it is a glorious, harmonic glow. "All Of Us" is very different. There is a breezy flow as trumpet and sax gently wrap around the melody, creating a finger-snapping cool vibe. Brand's bluesy riffs are a perfect complement. Thad is exquisite on his trumpet, masterful and exacting. Mobley is equally dexterous. They offer a certain elegance to the overall musicality. Elvin's songwriting

Cedille



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70-74



contribution ("The Juggler") is like his drumming, tempo challenging and edgy. Thad distills a slow-burning intensity with soaring tonality. It is amazing how he and Mobley are able to exhibit commonality in horn and reed sounds. Brand'a unconventional piano technique (both right, hand and chords) is emotive with a bluesy swagger.

Speakers Corner Records has done a stellar job in re-mastering *Midnight Walk* to 180-gram vinyl. The overall mix is crisp and balanced. Thad Jones' trumpet and Hank Mobley's tenor saxophone are vibrant, front and center. The stereo separation is flawless. The glossy album reproduction and protective inner sleeve are top-notch.

TrackList:

Side One:

Midnight Walk

Lycra Too?

Tintiyana

H.M. on F.M.

Side Two:

Cross Purpose

All Of Us

The Juggler

—Robbie Gerson



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