

Paul Rigby

(The Audiophile Man)

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Thelonius Monk

Title: Big Band and Quartet In Concert

Label: Speakers Corner

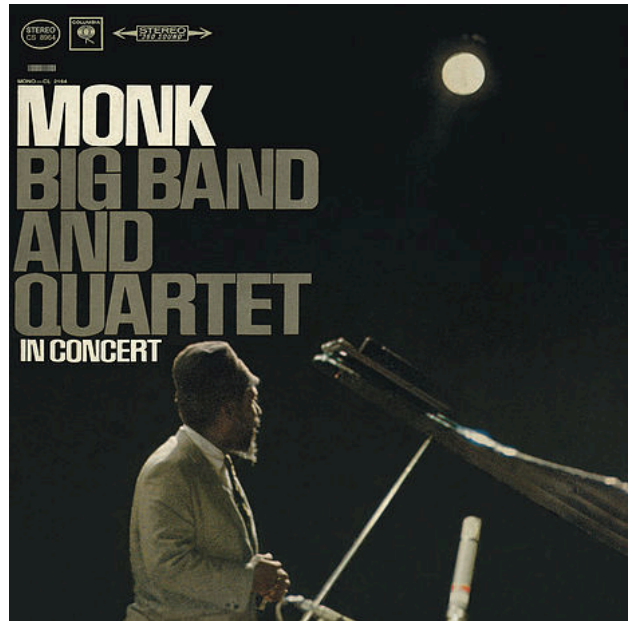
Released in 1964 on the Columbia label, this LP sees the great man at the very top of his game. In fact, it is surely one of the jazz man's greatest recordings. Is that partly down to the fact that this LP is set within a live setting and Monk is allowed to reach out and respond to his audience? The band performed at the Philharmonic Hall in New York, the first time that the crew had appeared there in five years. At that time, as George T. Simon from the New York Herald Tribune observed, "...the sound emphasis was on a brassy bottom with French horn and tuba in the ensemble. This time, clarinets and soprano saxophone were utilised along with muted brass for different texture and quality."

This tweak in approach produced a springy, delicate and at times fragile presentation which allowed the music to be light on its feet. It is certainly highly manoeuvrable, never getting bogged down and always able to twist this way and that. Changing from solo to solo, back to the ensemble, tempo changes, you name it. The arranger, Hall Overton, has to take much of the credit here for keeping the music on its toes while giving Monk all the freedom he requires to really show his chops.

The quartet appear for a single track (Played Twice) and include Charlie Rouse on tenor, bassist Butch Warren and drummer Frank Dunlop) while, for the rest of the album, that quartet is joined by cornetist Thad Jones, trumpeter Nick Travis, Steve Lacy on soprano, altoist Phil Woods, baritonist Gene Allen and trombonist Eddie Bert.

The master is superb, giving room for as much dynamic extension as the music requires. Because of this, the fine arrangement and the solos simply soar.

From the pen of Paul Rigby



139 comments



Leave a message...



Hi Paul

What, in terms of possibly buying something else, do you mean? The Black is a superb cart but, if you did look elsewhere, what sort of budget are you looking at?

Paul Rigby · 5 days ago · Reply



Paul, I am contemplating send my c. 1990's Koestu Black K to Absolute Sounds then on to Koetsu Japan for refurbishment (as far as I know it only needs a re-tip). Cost new is £1788, refurbishment is £1380. Having reviewed the latest would you consider this a wise move?

Paul Kabrna · 5 days ago · Reply



Hi Dan

Only for consistency reasons. I have never reviewed SACD only CD. Partly because SACD remains a minority sport (along with DVD-A, Reel-to-Reel and contemporary cassettes plus more popular yet still lower selling items such as 10" singles/EPs and 7" singles) and the audience for it is a niche within a niche, as it were. I have to draw the line somewhere. To review the SACD layer would, I suppose, have triggered questions such as "Why have you only reviewed this SACD disc and not others?" :)