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Mosaic Select: Grachan Moncur (MS 001)

Text from mosaicrecords.com announcing this set:

"Taken together, all of the recordings on this three-disc set delineate a particularly fruitful period for both Blue Note and Moncur and their availability as a package makes it even easier to experience their full impact." Chris Hovan, Jazz & Blues Report

Limited Edition: 5000 copies

3 CDs - \$44.00 \$39.00

Feel The Instant Of Creation

"Every tune that I've written so far has a meaning and a story within it that I want the whole group to capture," Moncur explained. "A lot of guys, when they play, are not thinking about what they're actually playing; they're just thinking about maybe the chords, or how the rhythm changes, or something like that, but I really try to tell a story and I want the group that plays my tunes to try to see what I saw when I wrote them." There can be little doubt that Moncur has chosen the right performers for the interpretation of his music. Drummer Tony Williams, ...Herbie Hancock, another member of the Davis band, ... Tenor saxophonist Wayne Shorter was another important choice. "I really wanted Wayne," said Moncur, "because I know he would know about everything I was doing."
" - Don Heckmen, original liner notes

GRACHAN MONCUR III AND THE POINT OF DISCOVERY

It's a moment in time. And it's a reason for being. The point of discovery for Grachan Moncur III was the moment this music happened, an era when he and his contemporary Rodwell Rudd were the names in free jazz on trombone. And the point of discovery is Moncur's reason for playing trombone the way he does and writing music in his inimitable style.

Hearing these tracks again is to put yourself in a time when jazz was an uncontrollable force. There were innovations everywhere. Some were regional. Some stylistic. Some petered out. Others haunt us still. But again, the job of the discoverer is not to sort all that out. It's to go on discovering. And Grachan Moncur III -- a man in his 20s during the 1960s -- was virile, alert, determined, respectful of tradition, trained in composition and on his instrument, but eager for something new, to find "what else."

The album titles from the time tell it all: There were Jackie McLean's "One Step Beyond" and "Destination Out." There were Moncur's own "Evolution" and "Some Other Stuff." These were young men on a quest to find a place in art where there was no place, because that place was always moving away.

Musician and Composer of Merit

The McLean LPs more or less introduced Moncur to the world as a musician and composer, and his importance in both fields was immediately felt. His music had a peculiar characteristic of seeming at the same time familiar and strange, like Monk's. Yes, you find yourself saying, "Frankenstein" is a jazz waltz, but it's like no jazz waltz I've heard. Yes, "Air Raid" is propelled against a very present sense of time, and it's a composition with a clear structure, but I'm not sure exactly where "one" comes again. And "Evolution?" Pure art. That kind of thing. His music toys with your expectations at the same time that it fulfills them.

And his sound was all his own. While the trombone is by nature intensely masculine, Moncur could always find its ethereal qualities. Sleek, unadorned, his blowing clear and direct, Moncur's music could move right smack into you.

This newly remastered Mosaic Select package captures Moncur in the act, with the aforementioned Jackie McLean (replaced by Wayne Shorter on the "Some Other Stuff" sessions) and with that exceptional young dynamo, Tony Williams on drums. In addition to the records already mentioned, this set also includes McLean's "Hipnosis" and most of "'Bout Soul". Sidemen include Bobby Hutcherson, Eddie Kahn, Larry Ridley, Roy Haynes, Lee Morgan, Bob Cranshaw, Herbie Hancock, Cecil McBee, Woody Shaw, Lamont Johnson, Scotty Holt, Billy Higgins and Rashied Ali. The four sessions led by Jackie McLean include a number of Moncur compositions, and help bookend the material on the now out-of-print Mosaic package, "The Complete Blue Note 1964-1966 Jackie McLean Sessions." This set is limited, too, and is certain to sell out. Please reserve yours.

Track Listing & Discography

DISC ONE:

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|----------------------------|-------|----------------------|
| 1. Saturday And Sunday (A) | 11:16 | (Jackie McLean) |
| 2. Frankenstein (A) | 7:28 | (Grachan Moncur III) |
| 3. Blue Rondo (A) | 4:49 | (Jackie McLean) |
| 4. Ghost Town (B) | 14:34 | (Grachan Moncur III) |
| 5. Love And Hate (B) | 8:23 | (Grachan Moncur III) |
| 6. Esoteric (B) | 9:03 | (Grachan Moncur III) |
| 7. Kahlil The Prophet (B) | 10:25 | (Jackie McLean) |
| 8. Riff Raff (B) | 7:07 | (Grachan Moncur III) |

DISC TWO:

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|---|-------|----------------------|
| 1. Saturday And Sunday (alternate take) (A) | 9:23 | (Jackie McLean) |
| 2. Air Raid (C) | 9:15 | (Grachan Moncur III) |
| 3. Evolution (C) | 12:21 | (Grachan Moncur III) |
| 4. The Coaster (C) | 11:36 | (Grachan Moncur III) |
| 5. Monk In Wonderland (C) | 7:51 | (Grachan Moncur III) |
| 6. Conversion Point (F) | 9:47 | (Jackie McLean) |
| 7. Erdu (F) | 5:56 | (Lamont Johnson) |

8. Soul (F) 10:17 (Grachan Moncur III -Barbara Simmons)

DISC THREE:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-------|----------------------|
| 1. Hipnosis (E) | 11:17 | (Grachan Moncur III) |
| 2. Slow Poke (E) | 7:44 | (Jackie McLean) |
| 3. The Breakout (E) | 6:28 | (Jackie McLean) |
| 4. Back Home (E) | 6:03 | (Grachan Moncur III) |
| 5. The Reason Why (E) | 6:50 | (Lamont Johnson) |
| 6. Gnostic (D) | 11:45 | (Grachan Moncur III) |
| 7. Thandiwa (D) | 8:14 | (Grachan Moncur III) |
| 8. The Twins (D) | 12:55 | (Grachan Moncur III) |
| 9. Nomadic (D) | 7:42 | (Grachan Moncur III) |
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(A) Jackie McLean, alto saxophone; Grachan Moncur III, trombone; Bobby Hutcherson, vibes; Eddie Kahn, bass; Tony Williams, drums.

Recorded on April 30, 1963.

Originally issued as ONE STEP BEYOND by Jackie McLean (Blue Note BST 84137). The alternate take of "Saturday And Sunday" was originally issued on the CD version of the album (CDP 7-46821-2).

(B) Jackie McLean, alto saxophone; Grachan Moncur III, trombone; Bobby Hutcherson, vibes; Larry Ridley, bass; Roy Haynes, drums.

Recorded on September 20, 1963.

Originally issued as DESTINATION OUT by Jackie McLean (Blue Note BST 84165).

(C) Jackie McLean, alto saxophone; Lee Morgan, trumpet; Grachan Moncur III, trombone; Bobby Hutcherson, vibes; Bob Cranshaw, bass; Tony Williams, drums.

Recorded on November 21, 1963.

Originally issued as EVOLUTION by Grachan Moncur III (Blue Note BST 84153). 7-84153-2.

(D) Wayne Shorter, tenor saxophone; Grachan Moncur III, trombone; Herbie Hancock, piano; Cecil McBee, bass; Tony Williams, drums.

Recorded on July 6, 1964

Originally issued as SOME OTHER STUFF (Blue Note BST 84177). 8-32092-2.

(E) Jackie McLean, alto saxophone; Grachan Moncur III, trombone; Lamont Johnson, piano; Scotty Holt, bass; Billy Higgins, drums.

Recorded on February 3, 1967.

Originally issued on HIPNOSIS by Jackie Mclean (Blue Note BN-LA 483-2).

(F) Jackie McLean, alto saxophone; Woody Shaw, trumpet; Grachan Moncur III, trombone; Lamont Johnson, piano; Scotty Holt, bass; Rashied Ali, drums.

Recorded on September 8, 1967.

Originally issued on 'BOUT SOUL by Jackie Mclean (Blue Note BST 84284).

Original sessions produced by Alfred Lion (A-E) and Francis Wolff (F).

Recorded at the Van Gelder Studio, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.

Recording engineer: Rudy Van Gelder.

Original album covers designed by Reid Miles.

All photographs by Francis Wolff © Mosaic Images.

Produced for release by Michael Cuscuna.

Transferred in 24-bit and mastered by Ron McMaster.

Note: The noise heard in the final chord of “Back Home” is in the original tape.

Masters appear courtesy of Blue Note Records, a division of Capitol Records, Inc.

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