

Most of the titles on this album are derived from Thelonious Monk's vast catalog of bop standards. Both co-leaders are at the peak of their respective prowess with insightful interpretations of nearly half a dozen inspired performances from this incarnation of the Blakey-led Jazz Messengers. This combo features Art Blakey (drums), Johnny Griffin (tenor sax), Bill Hardman (trumpet), and Spanky Debreest (bass). Immediately, Hardman ups the ante with a piledriving lead during "Evidence" that underscores the heavy-hitting nature of this particular jazz confab. Monk counters with some powerful and inspired runs that are sonically splintered by the enthusiastic -- if not practically percussive -- chord progressions and highly logistic phrasings from the pianist. The inherent melodic buoyancy on "In Walked Bud" contains a springboard-like quality, with Griffin matching Monk's bounce measure for measure. Griffin's incessant efforts create a freshness to the tune that often escapes other less inspired readings. From Blakey's boisterous opening on "Blue Monk" through to Monk's single-note crescendo during the finale, the Jazz Messengers provide a lethargic propulsion that showcases the melody's bluesy origins. This directly contrasts the uptempo charge of "Rhythm-A-Ning." The quirky yet catchy chorus glides with the dual-lead horn section as the entire arrangement is tautly bound by the understated Debreest and Blakey. Griffin's "Purple Shades" is the only non-Monk composition that this aggregate recorded. This smartly syncopated blues seems better suited for the Jazz Messengers than for Monk. However, the pianist's opening solo alternately shimmers and shudders with Debreest as well as Griffin and Hardman, who demonstrate their own pronounced capabilities over Monk's otherwise occasional counterpoint.

# ART BLAKEY'S JAZZ MESSENGERS WITH THELONIOUS MONK



Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers with Thelonious Monk is a studio album released in 1958 on Atlantic Records, catalogue SD 1278. It is a collaboration between the Jazz Messengers, the group led by drummer Art Blakey, and special guest Thelonious Monk on piano. The album is the only time Monk recorded for the Atlantic label.

Throughout the preceding decade, on sessions for both Blue Note and Riverside, Blakey had supported Monk on various occasions. Monk returned the favor on this one-off session for Atlantic. Blakey was on the verge of beginning a long-term contract with Blue Note, while Monk was in the middle of his stay on Riverside.

One month after these recordings, Monk would begin his summer and autumn residency at the Five Spot on Cooper Square after regaining his cabaret card, without which he had been barred

from playing in most of New York City's clubs. Monk's quartet featuring John Coltrane at that residency would bring Monk fame beyond the inner circle of jazz aficionados. Atlantic released this album over a year after it was recorded, thereby capitalizing on Monk's increased visibility.

Billboard in 1958 gave the album three stars out of four, stating that it has some "mighty good jazz". AllMusic gave the album a four-star rating out of a possible five stars, with writer Lindsay Planer noting that "both co-leaders are at the peak of their respective prowess with insightful interpretations of nearly half a dozen inspired performances from this incarnation of the Blakey-led Jazz Messengers." The Penguin Guide to Jazz assigned its "crown" accolade to the album.

# Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers with Thelonious Monk

1. Evidence 6:42
  2. In Walked Bud 6:38
  3. Blue Monk 7:49
  4. I Mean You 7:58
  5. Rhythm-A-Ning 7:16
  6. Purple Shades 7:39
- Total Time: 44:02**

Transferred from a Atlantic 4-track tape

Engineer - Earl Brown      Supervised By - Nesuhi Ertegun

Recorded 1958