

for Prestige and New Jazz which, due to the abysmal pay and his developing style, he later disowned. Actually they are not bad but pale in comparison to McLean's classic series of 21 Blue Note albums (1959–1967). On sessions such as *One Step Beyond* and *Destination Out*, McLean really stretches and challenges himself; this music is quite original and intense yet logical. McLean also appeared as a sideman on some sessions for Blue Note (most notably with Tina Brooks, acted in the stage play *The Connection* (1959–1961), and led his own groups on a regular basis. By 1968, however, he was moving into the jazz education field and other than some SteepleChase records from 1972–1974 (including two meetings with his early idol Dexter Gordon) and an outing for RCA (1978–1979), McLean was less active as a player during the '70s. However in the '80s Jackie McLean returned to a more active playing schedule (sometimes with his son René McLean on tenor), recording for Triloka, Antilles, and most recently (with a renewed relationship) with Blue Note -- without losing the intensity and passion of his earlier days.



# *one step beyond* *jackie mclean*

In 1963, alto saxophonist Jackie McLean was well aware of John Coltrane and Ornette Coleman. He assembled a band with vibist Bobby Hutcherson, who had already played with Eric Dolphy, drummer Tony Williams, bassist Eddie Khan, and trombonist/composer Grachan Moncur III. While still adhering to the hard bop principle, *One Step Beyond's* title is literal. The introduction of space as an element in the twin-horn front line is consistent with what would come later that year on *Destination Out!* McLean is clearly hearing the Eastern modalism and intervallic invention in Coltrane's sound at this point, but still moves in his own direction, sticking very close to the blues and the hard, even relentless, swing provided by Williams on the kit. The true visionary compositions here are Moncur's "Frankenstein" and "Ghost Town." Their unconventional solo-horn melodic statements are followed by two horn choruses that use Hutcherson's vibes as a contrapuntal element as he spreads his chords so wide that he comes off like a pair of pianos playing complementary harmonic strategies, and it's revolutionary. Add to this Moncur's insistence on soloing inside the changes as McLean moves through the register and becomes increasingly dissonant, and you have a true doppelgänger effect -- but one that swings like mad. *One Step Beyond* may

have been the first volley McLean fired in the direction of the new jazz, and played it safe enough to ride out the hard bop he helped to create, but he cannot be faulted as a bandleader, as this music still sounds fresh, vital, and full of grainy mystery.

Jackie McLean has long had his own sound, played slightly sharp and with great intensity; he is recognizable within two notes. McLean was one of the few bop-oriented players of the early '50s who explored free jazz in the '60s, widening his emotional range and drawing from the new music qualities that fit his musical personality.

*One Step Beyond*The son of guitarist John McLean (who played guitar with Tiny Bradshaw), Jackie started on alto when he was 15. As a teenager he was friends with such neighbors as Bud Powell, Thelonious Monk, and Sonny Rollins. He made his recording debut with Miles Davis in 1951 and the rest of the decade could be considered his apprenticeship. McLean worked with George Wallington, Charles Mingus, and Art Blakey's *Jazz Messengers* (1956-1958). He also participated on a string of jam session-flavored records

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- 1 Saturday And Sunday 10:32**
- 2 Frankenstein 7:45**
- 3 Blue Rondo 4:55**
- 4 Ghost Town 14:45**

Recorded At - Van Gelder Studio, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey  
by Blue Note 1963    Producer - Alfred Lion    Engineer - Rudy Van Gelder



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