

*Milt Jackson
at The Museum
of Modern Art*



Milt Jackson and Ray Brown



Milt Jackson at the Museum of Modern Art is one of the many live jazz record dates that should be better known than it is. Perhaps it's because the LP has been unavailable in America since the early '70s; it was released on CD only briefly in Japan. Verve's brilliant Originals series has remedied this situation by issuing the gatefold-sleeve of the LP in a fine edition on compact disc (with the original liner notes pasted into a handsome booklet with the original photos). Released in 1965, shortly after the concert took place, this set is regarded by jazz historians as one of the greatest concerts ever to be performed during the MOMA's terrific free concert series during the '60s. During a rare respite from the Modern Jazz Quartet, Jackson was able to record as a solo artist with musicians of his own caliber. In this case his companions are pianist Cedar Walton, bassist Ron Carter (who was already playing with the Miles Davis Quintet), drummer Candy Finch, and James Moody on flute. The program is a lithe, breezy set of tunes written by Jackson, Walton, and Moody, with two exceptions: a beautiful reading of Jimmy Heath's "The Quota" to open the program, and a leisurely, sensitive stroll through J.J. Johnson's "Enigma." Even encountering this in the 21st century, the easy, symbiotic flow and tight arrangements are quite surprising. Heath's tune is a knotty hard bop number with a tight, brief head, and Jackson takes the first solo with requisite hipness and swing. Moody's flute fills the first chorus a bit and then drops out, leaving the rhythm section to

dig into it with Jackson. Moody's solo wraps itself around the fat comping chords of Walton and darts in and out of Carter's hard dancing pulse. This is followed by the Latin tinge of "Novamo" by Jackson. The rhythm section sets out pacing a near charanga, and Jackson and Moody move through it with a beautiful, repetitive, singsong melody that quickly gives way to one of the great vibist's elegant high-register solos. Walton was already in his early thirties when he played with Jackson, and he'd been on the N.Y. scene for a decade, but this was before he became a house pianist with Prestige and well-known as a composer. His tune "Turquoise" is a fiery, fast bop waltz, with a terrific front-line melody for Moody and Jackson. Milt takes the first solo and turns the high notes into a blur of groove and grease. There's terrific humor on the set as well: Jackson's "Flying Saucer" begins in montuno mode. His voice at the intro sounds like something from the Twilight Zone before the rhythm section kicks in and he lays out the melody. Moody takes it away from the montuno feel and turns it toward the blues, but Jackson counters and begins singing in a perfect hepcat confidence, reinforcing the Latin groove. It might be the best tune here. This date is red hot for any fan who lives for jazz with rhythm, swing, and soul in equal tonnage.

Milt Jackson

Live at The Museum Of Modern Art

- 1 The Quota 4:32
 - 2 Novamo 5:45
 - 3 Enigma 3:40
 - 4 Turquoise 5:15
 - 5 Chyrise 3:20
 - 6 Montelei 4:45
 - 7 Simplicity & Beauty 2:44
 - 8 Flying Saucer 5:00
 - 9 Namesake 4:12
- Total Time: 39:13

Transferred from 15 ips 2-track tape

Recorded by Limelight / Mercury Records

Engineer – Tom Owen Producer – Luchi De Jesus

Recorded "Live" at the Museum of Modern Art in NYC, August 12, 1965