

Blakey's influence as a bandleader could not have been nearly so great had he not been such a skilled instrumentalist. No drummer ever drove a band harder; none could generate more sheer momentum in the course of a tune; and probably no drummer had a lower boiling point -- Blakey started every performance full-bore and went from there. His accompaniment style was relentless, and woe to the young saxophonist who couldn't keep up, for Blakey would run him over like a fullback. Blakey differed from other bop drummers in that his style was almost wholly about the music's physical attributes. Where his contemporary Max Roach dealt extensively with the drummer's relationship to melody and timbre, for example, Blakey showed little interest in such matters. To him, jazz percussion wasn't about tone color; it was about rhythm -- first, last, and in between. Blakey's drum set was the engine that propelled the music. To the extent that he exhibited little conceptual development over the course of his long career, either as a player or as a bandleader, Blakey was limited. He was no visionary by any means. But Blakey did one thing exceedingly well, and he did it with genius, spirit, and generosity until the very end of his life.



# the afro- beat

**ART BLAKEY  
AND THE  
AFRO-DRUM  
ENSEMBLE**



Mastered in DSD256

As one of the earlier Jazz Fusion albums, and one of the earliest jazz albums to incorporate the African instruments, Jazz drumming legend Art Blakey teams up with the Afro-Drum Ensemble as they produce this Blue Note release entitled African Beat. If you're expecting a 50/50 split on the fusion end of things, this album reflects far more of a traditional African sound, as it features a percussion-heavy ensemble, along with minimal instruments, at times just a flute and a stand-up bass. Yusef Lateef, who was responsible for most of the wind instruments, displays his well-travelled musical talents as his playing style is an excellent compliment to the album.

Art Blakey has always been one to push the envelope when it comes to jazz, where in the 70's, he and the Art Messengers recorded many projects that were a different skew on straight-ahead jazz. This album recorded in 1962 was a far reach from the realm of the typical Blue Note catalog, and it makes you wonder how this album was received amongst Blue Note devotees and Blakey's contemporaries. As you can see the credits for this album, you will notice the abundance of African percussion, making this one of Blue Note's more unorthodox releases.

# the african beat

**ART BLAKEY  
AND THE  
AFRO-DRUM  
ENSEMBLE**

1 Prayer By Solomon G. Ilori / Ife L'Ayo 6:26

2 Obirin African 3:39

3 Love, The Mystery Of 9:23

4 Ero Ti Nr'ojeje 7:35

5 Ayiko Ayiko 7:13

6 Tobi Ilu 5:58

Total Time: 40:14

Transferred from a 15ips 2-track tape

Producer – Alfred Lion    Engineer – Rudy Van Gelder

Recorded for Blue Note records at the Van Gelder Studio, New Jersey on January 24, 1962



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