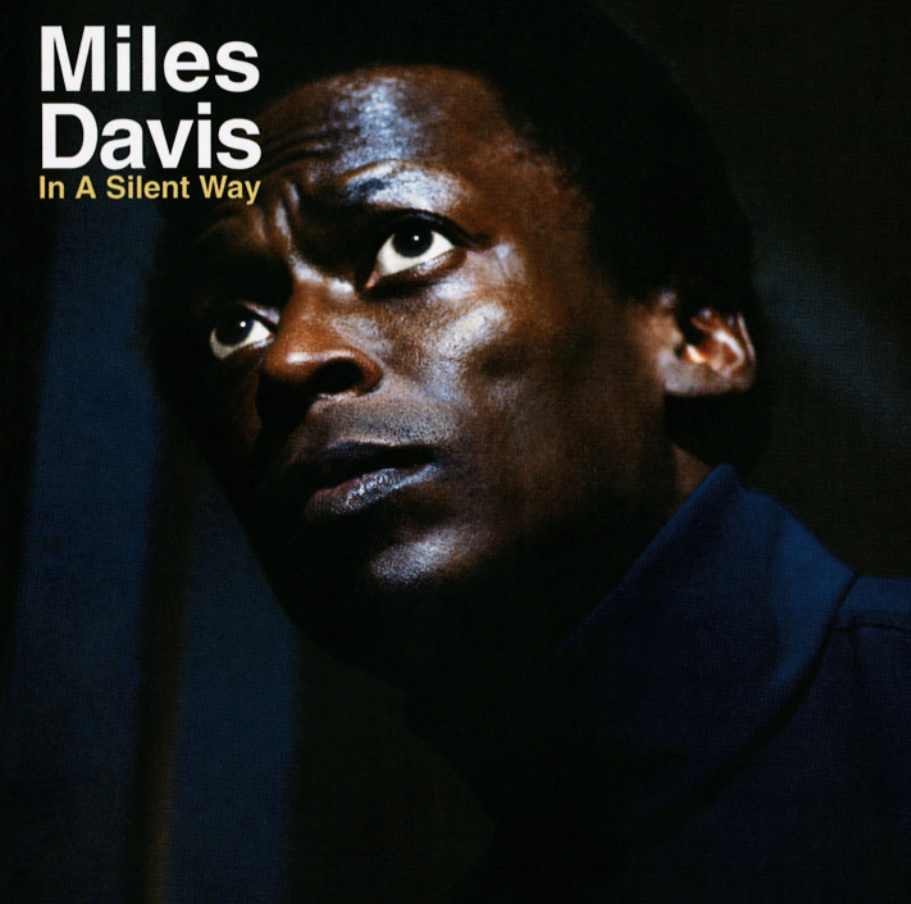


Miles Davis

In A Silent Way



86556
G010002927139L



Produced by Teo Macero

MILES DAVIS
IN A SILENT WAY

Side 1

SHHH/PEACEFUL (1967)

Side 2

IN A SILENT WAY/IT'S ABOUT THAT TIME (1967)

Engineers: Stan Tonkel, Russ Payne

Miles the dresser, Miles the boxer, Miles the bon vivant, Miles the pioneer. I use the word "pioneer" because over the past decade Miles has been ever searching for new sonorities, new ways of performing his music. In essence, NEW DIRECTIONS. I would chance to say that Miles is the most written about artist in the field of jazz, and I hate the word "jazz." I prefer using the phrase "field of music." Attendance in clubs has always been overwhelming. People come from all over to hear the one and only Miles Davis. A creative force is always at work within him. His recent albums are pointed to new directions for all who are interested in music. He has incorporated the best of jazz, so-called contemporary rock sounds and rhythms, a flair for the long thematic line reminiscent of the 16th-century composer, and the technique of the 20th-century composer using polyrhythms (many rhythms at once) and polytonalities (different chords played together). He has come up with something new in music. The form is free, and from this freedom a masterful outgrowth of composition has emerged. NEW DIRECTIONS by Miles is what it implies. People will follow him ten years hence.

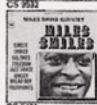
In my opinion, the so-called contemporary rock groups are now picking up on the early Miles Davis, trying to imitate but never quite making it. The present day rock groups, I am sure, dig Miles, but, here again, it will probably be another five to ten years before they really understand his creativity, his compositions, his mastery of musicianship. He has inspired countless musicians to create, to be creative and to rise from obscurity to take a place in the musical foreground. "That's right," says Miles Davis.

So with that I leave you to NEW DIRECTIONS by Miles Davis.

—Frank Glenn

Personnel:

Miles Davis, Trumpet
Herbie Hancock, Electric Piano
Chick Corea, Electric Piano
Wayne Shorter, Tenor Sax
Dave Holland, Bass
Josef Zawinul, Electric Piano and Organ
John McLaughlin, Guitar
Tony Williams, Drums



1 SHHH/PEACEFUL 18:16
M. DAVIS

2 IN A SILENT WAY/IT'S ABOUT THAT TIME

A] IN A SILENT WAY 4:11
J. ZAWINUL
B] IT'S ABOUT THAT TIME 11:27
M. DAVIS
C] IN A SILENT WAY 4:14
J. ZAWINUL

MILES DAVIS, TRUMPET

WAYNE SHORTER, SOPRANO SAXOPHONE

CHICK COREA & HERBIE HANCOCK, ELECTRIC PIANO

JOE ZAWINUL, ORGAN

JOHN MCLAUGHLIN, ELECTRIC GUITAR

DAVE HOLLAND, BASS

TONY WILLIAMS, DRUMS

RECORDED AT COLUMBIA STUDIO B, NYC.

ON FEBRUARY 18, 1969

ORIGINAL RECORDING ENGINEER: STAN TONKEL

REMIXED AND EDITED BY RUSS PAYNE

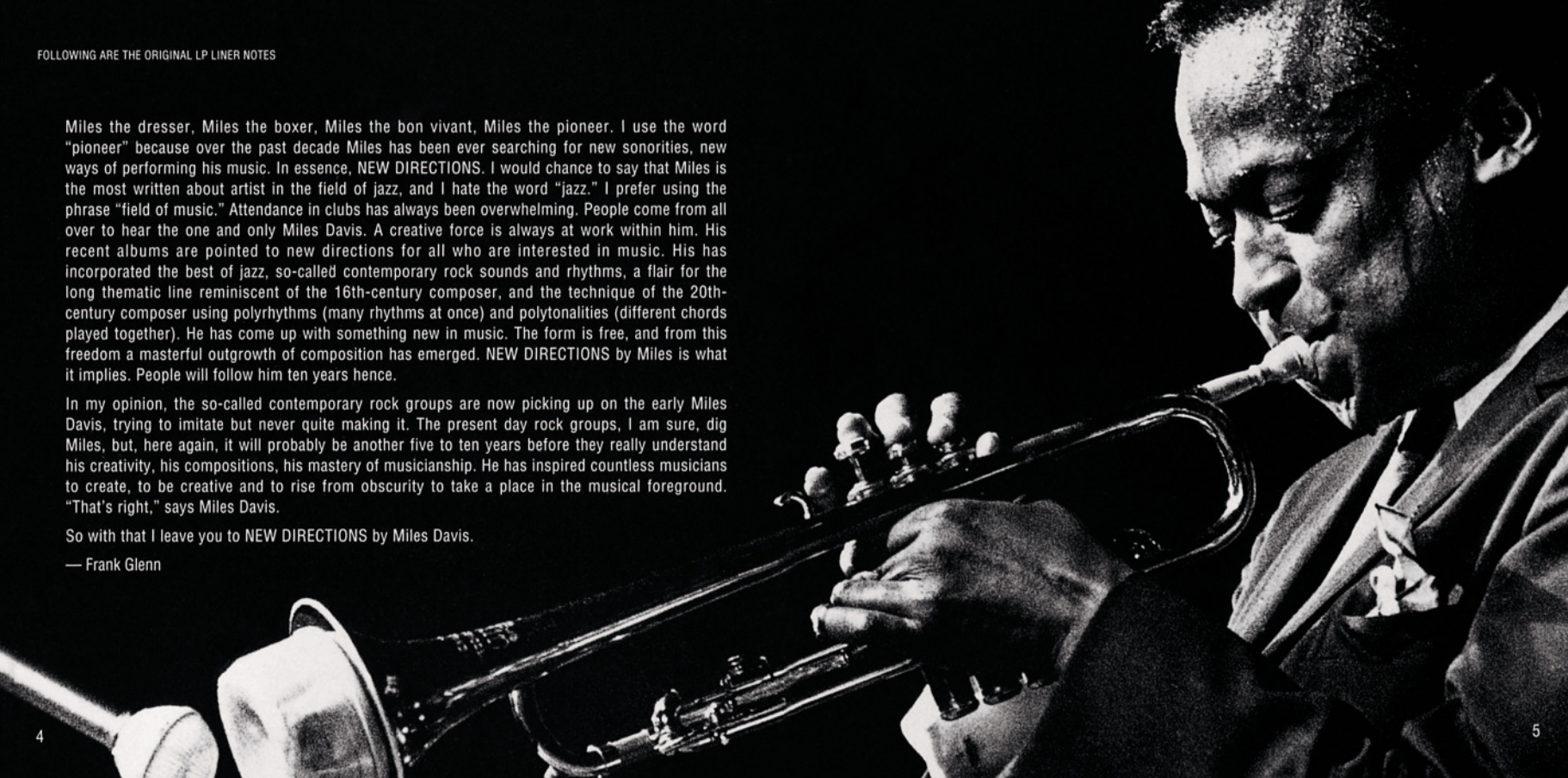
Cover photo: Lee Friedlander / Manufactured by Columbia Records/CBS, Inc. / 33 W. 52 Street, New York, N.Y. / © Columbia. "M" Music Reg. Printed in U.S.A.
Columbia stereo records can be played on today's mono record players with excellent results. They will last as long as mono records played on the same equipment, yet will reveal full stereo sound when played on stereo record players.

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— Frank Glenn





Shhh. Peaceful. Silent. Think lullaby. Or the sound of someone playing quietly, alone. Certainly not the sound of much musical activity, spontaneous or otherwise.

The setting is a recording studio, where a series of musical events have taken place over a short period of time. Apart from one composition, which, it turns out, becomes the album's title, names have not been assigned to anything quite yet. For the new listener, the 21st century listener, the music that is created out of these sessions may sound strangely undated, untethered to movement or style, perhaps pleasantly disorienting. But there are familiar qualities here. One can listen to the instruments, and to the musicians themselves. The new listener may not recognize a soul, but the players are anything but cagey in the way they express themselves. To the new listener, the music may be friendly, strangely comforting.

To the fan of Miles Davis, this music is likely to be as familiar, and welcome, as any he created during his 45-year-plus career as a trumpeter, sideman, bandleader, composer, conceptualist, troublemaker, renegade, innovator. In any event, the album *In A Silent Way* marks the first complete divide between what was and what was to come.

And not just for Miles Davis.

It's February, 1969, the firestorm known as *Bitches Brew* is still in incubation, 1968's *Filles De Kilimanjaro* and *Miles In The Sky* still sizzling with fresh, lovely, creative unrest.

In A Silent Way marks the complete divide, with long forms (including a sonata form, as Davis reissue producer Bob Belden notes), a suspension of the song as tune, and, most remarkable, the creation of a studio artistry that views music played as raw material to be combined, edited, recombined. For jazz, it is the emergence of the producer as artist.

Much has been said about this music's merging of routes, of jazz and rock and soul and pop and even classical. More noteworthy, however, is the suspension, if not disregard, of such musical idioms on *In A Silent Way*. The deft use of form and style, the using and discarding at will of so much sound, so much artistic brilliance, the reliance on intuition, on risk-taking, on not knowing: these qualities give this music a kind of non-temporal nature that makes

it tough to tag it to an era. *In A Silent Way* is certainly not reflective of the troubled times in which it was recorded. Even the electronics, which play such a prominent role, are somehow neutrally devised, the keyboards and guitar work clearly set off from what came before and after, but not in a manner that dates them, sonically or otherwise.

In A Silent Way is about quietude, about the "sounds of silence," the paradox that was so much a part of Miles Davis' art, the space he created around his horn and, with few exceptions, around the music of those who played with him. To get a better understanding of how this music was created, the reader is encouraged to consult Belden's marvelous liner notes to *The Complete In A Silent Way Sessions* (C3K 65362). (And, for a more poetic take, check out the original notes to the LP version by Frank Glenn, reprinted here.)

Needless to say, the process by which this music was created — both in terms of musical direction as well as editing — was

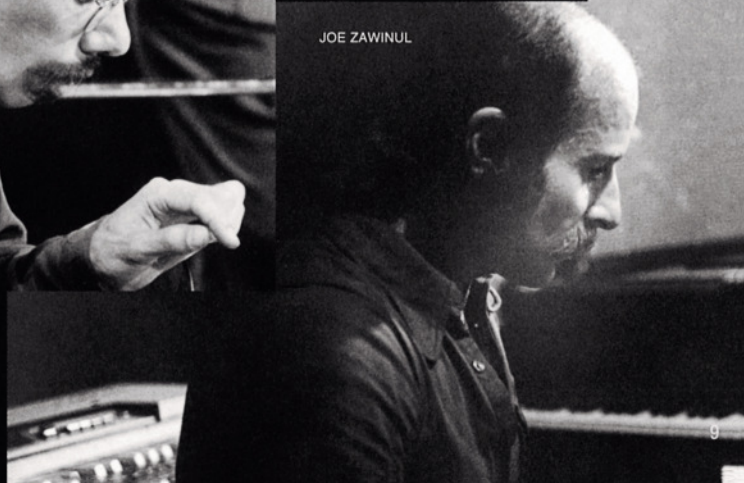
CHICK COREA



HERBIE HANCOCK



JOE ZAWINUL



unprecedented. The fact that Davis was able to shepherd so much talent onto one record with such a sketchy game plan, and to make it work as a piece of art (and not just a collection of amazing musical egos), tackling a novel form of playing/creating largely unheard of, remains a stunning achievement. Add the indispensable contributions and genius of producer Teo Macero, and you get music that lingers to this day as definitive, as a complete work from start to finish. A groundbreaking suite of sorts, the "ground" still not sure what to do with it.

The Complete In A Silent Way Sessions, released in 2001, charts a course that begins in 1968 with selections from *Filles De Kilimanjaro*, includes tantalizing sketches that chart the development of Davis' deliberate movements away from bebop, from "Walkin'," even from "Nefertiti." This three-CD set includes the sections of *In A Silent Way* that were combined by Macero later; the listener can hear the music as it was recorded first. There is the opportunity to enter in to the creative process, somewhat, before the final disc's representation of the complete, edited version that was to become the *In A Silent Way* that was released in 1969. It can make for fascinating listening. A must for students of the music and of Miles Davis.

But it is not *In A Silent Way* in the form presented here.

This definitive edition of *In A Silent Way* is the

keeper for the vast majority of music lovers. It is the one that will be played over and over again, maybe for the duration.

Shhh. Peaceful. Silent. There is no time like the present to enjoy music that celebrates silence, a silence which is disturbed only briefly, and at just the right times. Indeed, it's about that time. For those who adore the Milesean worlds of "My Funny Valentine," "Fran-Dance," *Ascenseur Pour L'Echafaud*, "Summer Night," and Davis and Gil Evans' take on Rodrigo's adagio movement from "Concierto De Aranjuez," there is, truth be told, much common ground to step on with *In A Silent Way*. It is the sound of Miles Davis the ballad player not playing ballads, and not using a mute, to boot. Yes, Joe Zawinul's incredible title-track melody, even its clipped form, comes closest to being an actual ballad (the full melody as the composer wrote it appears on the album *Zawinul*, Atlantic Records, 1971). But it is not the form that counts. It's the silence, the space, the simplicity. These are the qualities that were put to exceptional use and spread across a hall of fame of musical talent that was ripening on the vine in 1969.

Broadening his use of two keyboards to three, Davis brought together three of the most imaginative, distinctive voices in Zawinul, Herbie Hancock, and Chick Corea. Each had assigned roles as the band played the music of Joe Zawinul and Miles Davis. To others, three

keyboardists, let alone electrified ones, was a recipe for sonic congestion, density, mud. Not so here. Each player is heard as an individual, appropriating Davis' uncanny knack for listening and knowing when not to play. And Macero's crafty sleight-of-hand navigates the sound like a world-class surfer.

Heard on acoustic bass, relative newcomer (along with Corea and Zawinul) Dave Holland, likewise, plays what is needed and nothing more, working the angles to perfection, anchoring the delicate sonic thickets of this music. He is there but he is not there.

And main artery/Davis band vet Wayne Shorter, heard on soprano for the first time with Davis ('68's "Ascent" had yet to be released), reminds the world that even though his playing on the straight sax emerged as if fully formed, he, more than any other, is the man for the job, offering sweetness and light, a crucial and natural partner amidst all those fanciful keyboards and subtle rhythms.

But it is another Davis band vet who seems as much to be the director here as the leader, only from the rear. Drummer Tony Williams is getting ready to leave his boss only to blast off with *In A Silent Way* bandmate/guitarist John McLaughlin on his own. But here his playing is uncharacteristic: lots of cymbal swishes, a new rock beat not really heard until '68's *Miles In The Sky*. What is characteristic about

Williams' playing is that he is in the driver's seat, Davis' foundation for this new music, Davis' link from past to present to future. Williams' aesthetic was about opening up, moving the music, and, in concert with Davis, paring down to the essentials. But, like the music, he's relatively silent.

For every member of this group, playing with Davis was a turning point. And, more than anything else, the common denominator for all these incredible, burgeoning talents was learning the trumpeter's leadership style. Indeed, each member of *In A Silent Way*'s graduating class would go on to create their own music history from their fertile and impressionable few years together with Davis.

Commenting on Davis' style to this writer more recently, Holland noted, "Miles got involved and very engaged, but in a gentle way. He had a very gentle touch as a leader. People who played with him had the opportunity to do their thing, to do their stuff. That's all a musician ever wants - to be allowed to cut loose." Referring to Davis' knack for putting talent together, he noted, "Miles knew if he picked the right person and just gave them enough room, he'd get fantastic music. He knew that if you do that, musicians come up with their best work."

Holland may as well have been talking about *In A Silent Way*'s method of creating when he stated that Miles "never said much about what the music

should be; he mostly created a setting and asked you to figure out what you were supposed to do. He had enough trust in you to do that."

Sharing a similar perspective, McLaughlin said it a little differently in a *Down Beat* interview from 1991: "He's a real master in that sense of working with musicians. You just have to see Miles, and see how he works. I think it's obvious that my views are really just a reflection of his constant research. He's never betrayed anyone, and this is really wonderful."

Expressing even more passion in an interview for *Down Beat*, from 1989, Williams' take went like this: "One of the things that is most obvious, if you've ever been in a band like Miles', is the way he lets things develop. See, the thing is, if he hires people who are really good, that's what he wants them to be; he wants them to be as good as they are and get better...One of the wonderful things about Miles is that he wants those people, he hires you and gets good combinations of musicians together, so that they can make this music, which then again reflects on him, his judgment."

Holland could have been speaking for everyone from the *In A Silent Way* sessions when he added, "It's interesting how all the music from that period has found ways to have outlets. I see the stuff I'm doing now [2001] directly related to those experiences. The music doesn't sound the same, but those experiences have allowed me to go where I've gone."

A collection of fragments, solo vamps, sketches designed to get at essences. All in the name of keeping it simple. And silent. Peaceful. Bob Belden calls *In A Silent Way* "a masterful illusion." The listener, young and old, can decide. One thing is for sure: *In A Silent Way* ain't no period piece. Shhh.

— John Ephland
June, 2002

John Ephland, a former editor at Down Beat, spent a delightful, if brief, afternoon with Miles Davis back in 1988. He now lives in Kalamazoo and works for the local art institute and school, continues as a music writer, and has taught graduate-level music criticism.

JOHN MCLAUGHLIN



DAVE HOLLAND

TONY WILLIAMS

ORIGINAL RECORDINGS PRODUCED BY TEO MACERO

REISSUE PRODUCED BY BOB BELDEN AND MICHAEL CUSCUNA

PROJECT DIRECTOR: SETH ROTHSTEIN

MIXED AND MASTERED WITH 24-BIT SUPER BIT MAPPING BY MARK WILDER, SONY

MUSIC STUDIOS, NEW YORK

LEGACY A&R: STEVE BERKOWITZ

A&R COORDINATION: DARREN SALMIERI

COVER PHOTO: LEE FRIEDLANDER

REISSUE ART DIRECTION: HOWARD FRITZSON

REISSUE DESIGN: RANDALL MARTIN

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A DELUXE 3-CD SET WITH AN ACCOMPANYING 96-PAGE BOOKLET.

miles-davis.com

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and deserved position of jazz preeminence. Another evolutionary step was being taken by the end of the '60s. This was fusion, the earliest stages of which can be traced through several of Miles Davis' Columbia recordings. The trumpeter's innovations inspired his sidemen to create groups of their own such as Weather Report, featuring Wayne Shorter and Josef Zawinul, Chick Corea's Return To Forever, Herbie Hancock's Headhunters, John McLaughlin's Mahavishnu Orchestra and the Tony Williams Lifetime, all of which made important recordings on Columbia during the '70s. At the same time, the label documented pioneers of acoustic new music with important recordings by Ornette Coleman, Charles Mingus, Bill Evans, Dexter Gordon and Woody Shaw, plus the more pop-oriented instrumentals of Bob James and Lee Ritenour. Columbia again led the way when the jazz tradition was revisited by a generation

The history of jazz begins in 1917, and Columbia Records was right there at the inception. The label, which as a descendant of the Columbia Gramophone Company could already claim pioneering achievements in the development of the phonograph, the recording cylinder, the 78 rpm disc and the two-sided record, was the scene of the first studio session by the Original Dixieland Jazz band, as well as another seminal 1917 session by W.C. Handy's Orchestra of Memphis. Over the next three decades, through its own recording efforts and the purchase of such labels as Okeh, Brunswick and Vocalion, Columbia's holdings came to include seminal music by Mamie Smith, King Oliver, Louis Armstrong's Hot Fives and Sevens, Fletcher Henderson, Duke Ellington, Bix Beiderbecke, Bessie Smith, Ethel Waters, Teddy Wilson, Billie Holiday, Mildred Bailey and Red Norvo, Count Basie, Benny Goodman, Harry James, Gene Krupa and Woody Herman. Columbia's introduction of the 33 1/3 LP in 1948 launched two decades of recordings that emphasized influential small groups led by Erroll Garner, Dave Brubeck, Miles Davis and Thelonious Monk. Larger ensembles were also documented, including the unequalled Miles Davis/Gil Evans collaborations, the combustible mid-size groups of Charles Mingus and some of the early mergers of jazz and classical music involving Gunther Schuller. Columbia's historic first live recordings at the Newport Jazz Festival in 1956 returned the Duke Ellington Orchestra to its

The Legacy of Columbia Jazz

of young musicians in the '80s. Wynton and Branford Marsalis, Terence Blanchard and Donald Harrison, Marcus Roberts, James Carter, David Sanchez and Leon Parker are among this new wave of musicians that has sparked a new interest in jazz through their Columbia recordings. At the same time, Columbia continued to document jazz in all its varieties, from the classic sounds of Doc Cheatham to the uncategorizable creations of Henry Threadgill. Add the strong reissue activity under the Legacy imprint and Columbia continues its history as jazz's most comprehensive home base.