

THE JAZZ EXPERIMENTS OF CHARLES MINGUS



ILLUSTRATION BY:
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Foreword & Notes From
Original Vinyl Release



THE JAZZ EXPERIMENTS

This record is a result of a session for Period Records that was originally issued on two ten-inch records, titled "Jazzical Moods." Bethlehem acquired this material and repackaged and remastered it as this twelve-inch record.

Mingus uses the term "jazzical," as applied to this date, because the music contains both old and new classical forms as well as old and new jazz forms. However, since he also states that the music was the result of spontaneous writing on his part and not consciously based on any predetermined or preconceived form, it was felt that the title "The Jazz Experiments of Charles Mingus" would better identify the musical contents of the album.

The program notes that follow are by Mingus. They illuminate and provide context for the music, from the mind of its creator - the innovative Charles Mingus...

CHARLES MINGUS PERSONNEL

CHARLES MINGUS - Bass, Piano, Leader

JOHN LaPORTA - Clarinet, Alto Sax

TEO MACERO - Tenor, Baritone Sax

THAD JONES - Trumpet (Courtesy Debut Records)

JACKSON WILEY - Cello

CLEM DeROSA - Drums

Recorded December, 1954

"THE JAZZ EXPERIMENTS"

1. WHAT IS THIS THING CALLED LOVE? (Porter)

What Is This Thing Called Love was arranged in a manner to show that it is easy to listen to several lines at one time. I used this method originally on an arrangement of "Tea For Two," but this present arrangement is more complex. I employ three well-known melodies for the different lines, causing a little dissonance at times, which I feel enhances the other harmonies and serves as a device to overcome the mechanical imitations of some of the instruments.

2. MINOR INTRUSION (Mingus)

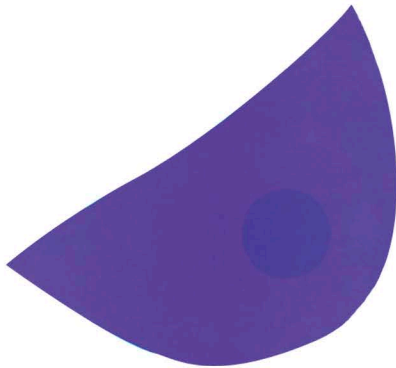
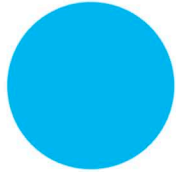
Minor Intrusion, my composition, is based on a blues feeling but does not use any of the blues progressions or the usual 12-bar phrase. After the brief introduction by drums, trumpet and alto, the bass sets a melodic line which is repeated by each instrument—cello, alto, tenor and trumpet—as it joins in the theme. While the piano "intrudes" and continues to develop the plaintive feeling with drums and cello rhythm, the trumpet makes an attempt to break away from this mood and into a happier feeling; but it is thwarted first by the alto and then by the tenor joining in and maintaining the original, sad mood. There then approaches a climax that is reached with two written lines for alto and trumpet. Jack continues to pick bass-like lines on cello while the piano sets chords behind the tenor ad lib solo which leads to the bridge with short, echo-like written solos—a confusion of voices, each vying with the other for prominence—which is topped by the tenor's mournful quarter-tone cry and followed by a different kind of blues feeling until alto and trumpet sharply herald the return to the original melodic line with faint tambourine in the background.

This time the pattern leads to a happier trumpet-alto duet instead of the piano's "minor intrusion" and the mood is prolonged by Teo's ad lib tenor solo. Where there was confusion before, with many lines entering, there is now harmony with cello and bass rhythms. The following movement is free from the confusion of written lines and solos and is replaced by soli between bass and alto, which strive toward unification. Teo's mournful cry is repeated, even stronger, the mood resolves back into a stronger blues feeling, and the composition ends on a suspended harmony of indecision.

I might add that Teo is one answer to the prayer of any composer who sometimes feels the need for instruments (besides some string and percussion instruments) that can be used to play definite quarter tones, and I took advantage of his presence to include a few bars of quarter tones in "Minor Intrusion."

HI-FI

"THE JAZZ EXPERIMENTS"



"In my music i'm trying to play the truth of what I am. The reason it's difficult is because i'm changing all the time."

Rest In Peace, *Charles Mingus*
(4.22.1922 - 1.5.1979)



3. STORMY WEATHER (Koehler-Arlen)

Stormy Weather, arranged by John LaPorta, is reminiscent of "Jump-for-Joy"-period Ellington. The trumpet's warm tone is showcased here to great advantage and is featured all the way.

4. FOUR HANDS (Mingus-LaPorta)

Four Hands is a swinging opus on which I make my debut on piano (I'm really a frustrated pianist). Excellent solo work is heard by Teo Macero on tenor and John LaPorta on alto.

5. THRICE UPON A THEME (Mingus)

Thrice Upon A Theme consists of two movements, and, in effect, the second movement is a development of the first movement, or theme. An interlude follows the second movement and first movement is repeated and further developed. A redevelopment of the second movement follows (which as previously stated is a higher development of the first movement—higher in both musical and emotional pitch). The subdominant of the tonic is transposed, meaning that we are in a minor key a fourth higher than the original movement (F to Bb), which, for the layman is simply A B C to D or, to put it another way, the same melody repeated in a higher key. The original movement repeated by bass, clarinet and baritone segues to a drum solo with short chords that echo break, followed by a descending chromatic line, and a percussion pedal cluster on piano, climaxing in a chaos of free lines played by all instruments.

6. THE SPUR OF THE MOMENT (LaPorta)

The Spur Of The Moment is one of the pieces with Thad Jones. This composition has three melodic parts that are at the same time linear and interwoven. The tenor plays a modern trombone line, the trumpet assumes an indolent lead, while the alto sax is busy with his discourse somewhere between the two. There are solos by all the instrumentalists and it ends with the tenor and alto arguing about the original material.

..... THANKS FOR LISTENING!

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