

WORKIN' WITH THE MILES DAVIS QUINTET

JOHN COLTRANE | RED GARLAND | PAUL CHAMBERS | "PHILLY" JOE JONES | PRESTIGE 7166



Photo of Miles Davis



WORKIN' WITH THE MILES DAVIS QUINTET

MILES DAVIS trumpet JOHN COLTRANE tenor saxophone RED GARLAND piano
PAUL CHAMBERS bass PHILLY JOE JONES drums

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 IT NEVER ENTERED MY MIND 5:21 | 5 TRANE'S BLUES 8:29 |
| 2 FOUR 7:10 | 6 AHMAD'S BLUES 7:21 |
| 3 IN YOUR OWN SWEET WAY 5:39 | 7 HALF NELSON 4:43 |
| 4 THE THEME (TAKE 1) 1:57 | 8 THE THEME (TAKE 2) 1:03 |

Miles Davis's goal in his series of quintet albums for Prestige was to re-create the atmosphere and feeling of his band's engagement at the Café Bohemia. He, John Coltrane, Red Garland, Paul Chambers, and Philly Joe Jones replicated their sets at the Bohemia with intimacy, directness, and emotional engagement that was captured flawlessly by engineer Rudy Van Gelder. In all of Davis's discography, there is no more moving demonstration of his ability to communicate the romantic passion of a ballad than this performance of "It Never Entered My Mind"; no more joyous expression of the blues than "Trane's Blues"; no more successful negotiation of challenging new music than "In Your Own Sweet Way." *Workin'* remains as contemporary as the newest generation that adopts it. Every generation does.

*I remember the sessions well, I remember how the musicians wanted to sound, and I remember their reactions to the playbacks.
Today, I feel strongly that I am their messenger. —RUDY VAN GELDER*

Recorded by RUDY VAN GELDER at Van Gelder Studio, Hackensack, NJ; May 11, 1956 ("Half Nelson" recorded October 26, 1956).

Supervision by BOB WEINSTOCK Remastering, 2006—Rudy Van Gelder (Van Gelder Studio, Englewood Cliffs, NJ)

All transfers were made from the analog master tapes to digital at 24-bit resolution.

Notes by JOE GOLDBERG Total Time 42:27

www.concordmusicgroup.com • Prestige Records, Tenth and Parker, Berkeley, CA 94710.

© & © 2006, Concord Music Group, Inc., 100 North Crescent Drive, Beverly Hills, CA 90210.

All rights reserved. Unauthorized duplication is a violation of applicable laws.

WORKIN' WITH

MILES DAVIS trumpet
JOHN COLTRANE tenor saxophone RED GARLAND piano
PAUL CHAMBERS bass PHILLY JOE JONES drums

Miles Davis is the most maligned and idolized musician in modern American jazz today. He is at once the saint and the sinner. Miles has been attacked on the grounds that he is contemptuous of his audience, that he is a poor showman, that he often turns his back on his audience. He has been accused of being lackadaisical and unconcerned about his playing. When the spirit moves him he plays with warmth and lyric beauty, at other times he plays with vague disinterest. Miles has been given a mystic halo by his fanatic admirers, for them he can do no wrong. Each note is a secret that they share with him alone. But these secrets are more imagined than real.

Miles Davis is both the saint and the sinner. He is neither completely one nor the other. He is a musician of great talent and sensitivity whose playing is never mediocre. Miles is a musician whose talent and background have rocketed him to stardom, not only in the clandestine jazz circle, but in the hip periphery of show business. What he does and what he says make useful copy for almost any columnist on a metropolitan daily. And the group he plays with on this record, his most famous Quintet, is the group that boosted him from jazz into the charmed circle.

Workin' with the Miles Davis Quintet is the third album to be produced from two sessions in which 24 tracks were recorded. Previous to this *Cookin' with* (Prestige 7094) and *Relaxin' with the Miles Davis Quintet* (Prestige 7129) were issued, and each in its own way portrays a phase of the character of that highly stimulating group. And, after all, it is the group as a unit that makes the atmosphere for creation.

I can remember being in the now-defunct Café Bohemia in Greenwich Village one night during one of the Quintet's many 1956-57 stands there. It was early in the evening and the band was not functioning quite right. They were having, as the English would say, a sticky time of it. Miles sounded uninterested. His phrases rose and sailed in no particular direction. They were like bubbles blown indiscriminately to the winds. The only thing that held or imposed any sense of order on his solos was the chord progressions of

the tunes he played. John Coltrane trying. He leaned into his horn and sent flurries of notes over the audience, but his fingers seemed full of kinks, and from the look of him, John was more puzzled and annoyed by the trouble than anyone else in the room. The rhythm section functioned best of all, but they were forcing. There were times when I momentarily expected to see a deadly line of machine gun bullets appear in the tablecloth in front of me, Philly Joe Jones was that aggressive.

As our beer grew warm in the glasses before us, and Miles picked his next tune, I told Teddy Charles about these things that I noticed and felt. Referring to his friend Sidney Hall he agreed, but said, "Watch the rhythm section. This is the best rhythm section in jazz, the hardest swinging rhythm section, watch out when they loosen up."

At this point Miles and Coltrane abruptly walked off the stand. This was the usual cue for Red Garland to do his featured number—trio style. Miles did this regularly when he was bored, felt he needed a break or a beer. I don't remember what tune it was exactly, something like "Ahmad's Blues" in this album, if I'm not mistaken, a medium tempo that more or less plays itself.

From the beginning the three men relaxed. Alone on the stand Red, Paul, and Philly Joe relaxed and fell into a smooth spirited swing. The trio drew more applause for that one tune than the whole group had for the entire evening. When Miles and Coltrane returned to the bandstand the atmosphere in the club had changed. Somehow the tension had gone, and, on the next tune, "It Never Entered My Mind," which is also performed in this album, Miles played one of the most beautiful choruses I've ever heard him play.

The feeling created by the rhythm section on that one trio selection dispelled that aura of tension that had affected everyone, and replaced it with a secure calm. And the feeling that the rhythm section created that night at the Bohemia is in just about every one of the tracks here. The time is alive and flowing. It is relaxed and controlled and in no way overbearing. More than any one other thing, I believe that much of the

THE MILES DAVIS QUINTET

**IT NEVER ENTERED MY MIND
FOUR
IN YOUR OWN SWEET WAY
THE THEME (TAKE 1)**

**TRANE'S BLUES
AHMAD'S BLUES
HALF NELSON
THE THEME (TAKE 2)**

Quintet's and Miles's real strength and success came from the combined efforts of Red, Paul, and Philly Joe. It was as Teddy Charles said that night, "a gas," and something undeniably moving. But Miles disbanded the Quintet in the spring of 1957.

But on to the tunes:

"It Never Entered My Mind" is a perfect opener. Contrary to what a good many show folk believe, a wild lung-tearing flag-waver sometimes jostles the listener and creates a false impression of what's to follow. "Mind," in this case, is a quiet moving ballad that conditions the audience for the tender swing to follow. Choruses are by Miles into a mute, and soft Garland.

"Four" picks things up a bit but never destroys the easy mood. Miles's first chorus is strong and one of the best he's ever put on record. Coltrane hangs in and around the chords. He feels them, seems to reach out and touch them and then leap away (into an extension) as if somehow they were going to burn him. Red builds nicely, spacing out his phrases, and before the out chorus, Miles and Philly Joe split some fours. I think too that mention should be made here of the wonderful lyrics Jon Hendricks has put to this tune. His vocal treatment uses as a primary source Miles's original recording of the tune which is on Prestige 7054.

"In Your Own Sweet Way" is a Brubeck tune. The performance again is soft yet strong. The mood here is astoundingly like the original Brubeck piano solo version, although the Quintet takes it as a much quicker tempo. Coltrane is more aggressive than Miles, but nevertheless keeps the soft overall texture.

"The Theme" (take 1) completes the first side and created a set-ending finality. It's a short improvisation on the basic tune Miles has recorded, and he uses it to signal the band's run off. Here he flashes a bit of the dry impish humor that appears every so often in his playing. He noodles around, clips phrases, allows some room for Chambers and then, after a drum roll by Jones, slams the door shut on side 1. The inclusion of this lends an illusion of in-person

appearance to what actually was a studio date.

"Trane's Blues" is, as you can hear, built on "Theme"-atic material and is full of more gentle, wry Davis. Coltrane twice approaches an interpolation of "Kerry Dancers," but brings willpower to bear and moves his improvisation off in another direction. If only more had his courage to stay away from the obvious. Garland is again light and airy, carrying the mood. The tune winds up with a short "Salvation Army" unison and a snap statement of the melody.

"Ahmad's Blues" features Garland and the rhythm section. It was recorded because Miles often featured the trio on gigs, and he wanted Bob Weinstock to hear how they sounded. This track so impressed Bob that he signed Red to an exclusive contract and has recorded him in trio form on five different LPs. Red parodies Ahmad Jamal's style here through the opening chorus and then plays himself. Chambers also has a crooning bowed bass solo.

"Half Nelson" is most readily identified with Charlie Parker. The sound the group manufactures dramatically shatters the gossamer feeling that had been established. It's hard and grinding and shows the driving spirit of the rhythm section in their most famous light. Miles walks a tightrope above them, touching his feet down now and again to make sure they're still there. If you listen carefully, at the start of the bar trading between Miles and Philly Joe, you'll hear that Miles had originally intended to play four apiece, but Jones wanted to play eight apiece—and got them.

"The Theme" (take 2) closes things out. From the sound of this shortest of short takes, it's time to finish your beer, pay your check, pick up your change, and leave. . . . Like, later.

—JACK MAHER

*These notes appeared on
the original album liner.*

I WAS THE ENGINEER on the recording sessions and I also made the masters for the original LP issues of these albums. Since the advent of the CD, other people have been making the masters. Mastering is the final step in the process of creating the sound of the finished product. Now, thanks to the folks at the Concord Music Group who have given me the opportunity to remaster these albums, I can present my versions of the music on CD using modern technology. I remember the sessions well, I remember how the musicians wanted to sound, and I remember their reactions to the playbacks. Today, I feel strongly that I am their messenger. —RUDY VAN GELDER

WORKIN' WITH THE MILES DAVIS QUINTET REVISITED

THIS CD—or rather, the original 12-inch LP from which it was made—is one of four that resulted from two marathon recording sessions that took place in Rudy Van Gelder's recording studios on May 11 and October 26, 1956. Fifty years ago. The story has been told before, most recently in the boxed set commemorating the anniversary, containing all the music recorded for Prestige by these players. It is called *The Miles Davis Quintet: The Legendary Prestige Quintet Sessions*, and contains the four albums released from those two sessions, the single LP that preceded them, plus a CD of air checks that turned up later.

As I said, the story has been told before, but like most myths, it is worth telling again. Simply put, Miles was leaving Prestige for Columbia, and chose this way to fulfill his contract for a certain number of albums. In fact, the Columbia album was already in the can when most of this music was made; given the length of time he stayed with Columbia, it is the only complete album he made for them with this group.

The sessions were as much as possible like a live recording, only in a controlled situation. Miles called the numbers more or less as he would if he were onstage, and they were almost all played without retakes. If the set had been called *Live at Rudy's* and promoted as a club date, few people would be able to tell the difference. Which brings up what is, for me, the most astonishing thing about this music. How is it that a set of performances made up on the spot—jazz is improvised music, after all—retains so much excitement after half a century?

You could call it the magic of jazz, but most records don't have this kind of excitement on their release date, let alone 50 years later. More probably, it is the magic of Miles and Coltrane.

As is now generally known, Miles wanted Sonny Rollins for the tenor spot, but Sonny, for personal reasons, did not want to go on the road at the time. Coltrane was apparently the suggestion of Philly Joe Jones, the group's drummer, with whom Miles had been traveling, playing with locals in different towns. Supposedly, Miles said to Philly Joe, the first night he played with Coltrane, "You know what I think? I think this is it."

The two men complemented each other wonderfully. Someone once said that writers are either putter-inners or taker-outers. Here we have the equivalent of Ernest Hemingway performing with Herman Melville. It's entirely possible that there were evenings when Coltrane pursued the white whale of an idea to the furthest reaches of space and played more notes on one tune than Miles played all night. And of course, Coltrane went on to burst into his fullest glorious flower under the tutelage of the Great Taker-Outter, Thelonious Monk. (There is a story that Monk once simply sat staring at the piano at Birdland when it came time for his solo, whereupon Dizzy Gillespie, whose date it was, stepped up to the mike and informed the audience, "Monk is thinking.")

Philly Joe, of course, found the most appropriate backing for each man, usually employing brushes for Miles and sticks for Coltrane.

The previous annotator of this music, Jack Maher of *Metronome*, locates the success of the group in the rhythm section, although he spends much more space discussing the times he heard the group live than what is actually on the record.

I myself never heard the group live, although I did hear on several occasions the sextet into which it morphed, that recorded *Kind of Blue*. And at the Bohemia, which Maher mentions, I once heard a Miles Davis quintet that included Sonny Rollins and the drummer Art Taylor.

In truth, the band never worked that often or that regularly. For one thing, this was the period during which Miles had the famous throat surgery that left him with a speaking voice as unique (and imitated) as his trumpet sound. The group wasn't primarily a recording band, like the Louis Armstrong Hot Fives and Hot Sevens, but given their brief life span—only a couple of years—their impact was enormous.

A lot of that was due to Coltrane. As Cecil Taylor said to me, on hearing the first Columbia LP, "Coltrane's what you hear on that record."

Jazz moves very fast. For example, on one track, "Trane's Blues," the band plays a melody that Miles had recorded with Charlie Parker as "The Hymn." But only 20 years before that, it had provided the basis for Louis Armstrong's first recorded solo with King Oliver, who called it "Chimes Blues." Now to go from Armstrong to Parker in 20 years is like going from Bach to Stravinsky in that amount of time, which is practically unthinkable.

But Coltrane moved faster than that. He moved into multiphonics, he moved into Ornette Coleman harmonolodics, he moved into the shrieking animal sounds of free jazz, he moved to a place where few would follow him. For such an avant-garde figure, to be as popular as he has been goes against all that music history tells us. Next year, John will have been gone 40 years, the same number of years he was alive.

This year, both men would have turned 80—Davis on May 26, Coltrane on September 23. Both men have proved to be irreplaceable.

But instead of mourning the loss, let's look at what we have.

Miles opens the set with a ballad, an unusual move. It is Rodgers and Hart's "It Never Entered My Mind," which had recently appeared on Frank Sinatra's masterpiece "In the Wee Small Hours." It's a safe bet that Miles, a careful student of Sinatra's microphone technique, heard it there. With that and a mute, as used here, he did something so radical no one had ever thought of doing it before: he turned Louis Armstrong's brash, bragging trumpet into a vehicle for introspection.

"Four" is Miles's own composition, and a bop standard, which seems, in its second half, to be made up of equal parts of "How About You" and "If You Could See Me Now."

Next comes "In Your Own Sweet Way," by Dave Brubeck, a composer Davis might not have been expected to like.

"Trane's Blues," mentioned above, involves what Dan Morgenstern, in his notes for the box containing Miles's complete Prestige recordings, called "the paternity issue," adding, "credited to the leader, it might well be a Coltrane invention." It first appeared on a record under Paul Chambers's name, with the personnel of the quintet, minus its leader and with Kenny Drew in for pianist Red Garland. No doubt because of the names of the three quintet members on the album, it was called "John Paul Jones." The version Morgenstern was referring to was a quintet featuring Sonny Rollins and the pianist Tommy Flanagan, who has a superb solo on the piece, now called "Vierd Blues" apparently a tip of the hat to Alfred Lion, the guiding spirit of Blue Note, and his way of pronouncing the word weird. And now, it has become "Trane's Blues," by John Coltrane, even on a compilation of blues pieces that contain the version once called "John Paul Jones."

"Ahmad's Blues," by Ahmad Jamal, one of Miles's passions ("I live until he makes another record") features the rhythm trio with a delicate Red Garland and a rare bowed solo by Paul Chambers, and its practical function in a club was to give the horns a rest and give the boss a chance to get a drink, or chat with a friend, or simply leave and not turn up for the last set of the night.

"Half Nelson" is by Miles, written for a Savoy session with his mentor Charlie Parker. And then the band takes us out with "The Theme," just as they would in a club.

Would that they still could. Tonight, somewhere. But we have this set, to play whenever we want, and it will last as long as the form it epitomizes.

—JOE GOLDBERG
May 2006



1 IT NEVER ENTERED MY MIND

(Rodgers-Hart) Chappell & Co./Williamson Music-ASCAP 5:21

2 FOUR

(Miles Davis) Prestige Music-BMI 7:10

3 IN YOUR OWN SWEET WAY

(Dave Brubeck) Derry Music-BMI 5:39

4 THE THEME (TAKE 1)

(Davis) Second Floor Music/Jazz Horn Music-BMI 1:57

5 TRANE'S BLUES

(John Coltrane) Prestige-BMI 8:29

6 AHMAD'S BLUES

(Ahmad Jamal) EMI Longitude Music-BMI 7:21

7 HALF NELSON

(Davis) Screen Gems-EMI Music-BMI 4:43

8 THE THEME (TAKE 2)

(Davis) Second Floor/Jazz Horn-BMI 1:03

MILES DAVIS trumpet

JOHN COLTRANE tenor saxophone

RED GARLAND piano

PAUL CHAMBERS bass

PHILLY JOE JONES drums

Recorded by RUDY VAN GELDER at Van Gelder Studio,
Hackensack, NJ; May 11, 1956

("Half Nelson" recorded October 26, 1956)

Supervision by BOB WEINSTOCK

Cover photo—Esmond Edwards

Remastering, 2006—Rudy Van Gelder

(Van Gelder Studio, Englewood Cliffs, NJ)

Reissue produced by Nick Phillips and Bob Porter

Reissue production assistance—Stuart Kremsky

Project assistance—Rikka Arnold, Chris Clough, Terri Hinte

RVG REMASTERS SERIES:

Eric Dolphy—*Out There* (PRCD-8101-2)

Gene Ammons—*Boss Tenor* (PRCD-8102-2)

John Coltrane—*Lush Life* (PRCD-8103-2)

Relaxin' with the Miles Davis Quintet (PRCD-8104-2)

Sonny Rollins—*Saxophone Colossus* (PRCD-8105-2)

Coleman Hawkins—*The Hawk Relaxes* (PRCD-8106-2)

Kenny Burrell & John Coltrane (PRCD-8107-2)

Kenny Dorham—*Quiet Kenny* (PRCD-8108-2)

Red Garland's Piano (PRCD-8109-2)

The Modern Jazz Quartet—*Django* (PRCD-8110-2)

Jack McDuff—*The Honeydripper* (PRCD-30005-2)

John Coltrane—*Soultrane* (PRCD-30006-2)

Etta Jones—*Don't Go to Strangers* (PRCD-30007-2)

Miles Davis All Stars—*Walkin'* (PRCD-30008-2)

Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis—*Cookbook, vol. 1* (PRCD-30009-2)

Thelonious Monk & Sonny Rollins (PRCD-30010-2)

Mose Allison Sings (PRCD-30011-2)

Yusef Lateef—*Eastern Sounds* (PRCD-30012-2)

Oliver Nelson—*Screamin' the Blues* (PRCD-30013-2)

Richard "Groove" Holmes—*Soul Message* (PRCD-30014-2)



www.concordmusicgroup.com • Prestige Records, Tenth and Parker, Berkeley, CA 94710.

© & © 2006, Concord Music Group, Inc., 100 North Crescent Drive, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. All rights reserved.

RUDY VAN GELDER REMASTERS

