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oboe to tell it like it truly is (he is particularly effective on this instrument).

He takes to the tenor sax on the perky *Kongsberg*. Brooks keeps the kettles hot and the leader charges forth with a very gritty solo. Lawson, a man of talent, solos with verve.

Lateef's flute is subtly beautiful on the longing *Stay With Me*. Through the technique of overdubbing, he is heard on flute and tenor simultaneously on *See Line Woman*. Again, the tambourine enhances this sanctified performance.

Brother strides in spirited fashion, Lateef weaving urgent patterns. Lateef gives a fairly pleasant vocal reading of the blues on *You're Somewhere Thinking of Me* with a *Go-Down Moses*-like theme for background, and fingerbells for Far Eastern flavor. —Johnson

Thelonious Monk

UNDERGROUND MONK—Columbia CS 9632: *Thelonious*; *Ugly Beauty*; *Raise Four*; *Boo Boo's Birthday*; *Easy Street*; *Green Chimneys*; *In Walked Bud*.

Personnel: Charlie Rouse, tenor saxophone (tracks 2, 4, 6); Monk, piano; Larry Gales, bass; Ben Riley, drums; Jon Hendricks, vocal (track 7 only).

Rating: ★★★★★

The total lack of clues notwithstanding, this album is a significant addition to Monkiana, since it contains no less than four new pieces by the master, plus his interpretation of an oldie (*Easy Street*) he has not tackled on record before.

The liner notes don't tell you that, nor do they point out that tenorist Rouse lays out on all but three tracks. Instead, they ramble on about the ultra-campy cover, making the joke pointless in the process. Only Monk, a true untouchable, could survive such treatment with his dignity intact.

Monk occupies a peculiar position in jazz today. On the one hand, he is revered as a man who never compromised his integrity and yet made it. On the other, though none put him down, there is a definite air of taking Monk for granted—even of being somewhat bored with him. ("How was Monk?" "Well . . . Monk was Monk . . . you know . . . into his usual thing. . .")

The implication is that Monk's usual thing is just not very exciting any more. Everybody wants to be excited today, as if that were the most needed sensation to be derived from music (or any art) in these particular times. But there are degrees of excitement, even if one grants this dubious premise.

I, for one, find it "exciting" that Monk is still Monk; that he goes about distilling rather than diluting what is essential to him. It is ironic that a man who is respected precisely for having made the world accept him on his own terms should be slighted for maintaining his iconoclasm in the face of that acceptance. In today's terminology, hearing Monk is taking a trip, every time.

There has been a rather long stretch during which Monk hasn't come up with more than one or two new pieces per year, so the present additions to the canon (a quite respectable one, indeed; I'd estimate it at 60-plus tunes) are most welcome.

Ugly Beauty, the ballad (a *Monk* title, isn't it?) is bittersweet, of the lineage of *Ask Me Now*, *Ruby My Dear*, *Panonica* and *Crepuscule with Nellie*—the reflective, nostalgic aspects of love. As always, the interpretation brings out the melody in full contour, and Rouse is tuned in.

Green Chimneys is my favorite, a riff piece; minor with a major bridge. It reminds of *Dickie's Dream*, the "old" Lester Young classic. Rouse gets off on this. (He, too, so long with Monk, is taken for granted, while little heed is paid to the fact that he has absorbed more about how Monk's music should be played than any other saxophonist, including perhaps more brilliantly individualistic ones, who ever worked with him.)

After Rouse's fine solo (note how he employs the full register of the instrument to create unexpected contrast: sudden leaps to high notes; sudden barks below) Monk picks up a phrase the tenor man has toyed with and used to end his say, and works around with it delightfully. Then there's some finely attuned contrapuntal work between the two.

Raise Four is a blues by the trio; only Monk could take such a seemingly simplistic pattern of notes as this line, voice and space it so uniquely, get away with repeating it to the point of near anguish in the listener—and yet produce a feeling of release.

Boo Boo's Birthday is medium-up and pretty, the melody attractively exposed by piano and tenor. It reminds me a bit, in mood and shape, of *Eronel*, but that may be an idiosyncrasy; it's really quite distinct.

Easy Street seems to Monk's liking, for he plays it almost straight (but with those voicings and that phrasing) for two choruses and gets away from it for only two-thirds of the next. It is a likeable melody.

Jon Hendricks takes most of *Bud*—his lyrics refer to Dizzy, O.P., Byas and Bird, which the hippies might not be able to relate to—scatting with feeling. Monk does take a solo—spidery, almost Basie economical, and a gas.

The rhythm department is in good hands. While not aboard the Monk spaceship quite as long as Rouse, these two men have been at it, and know where it's at. Gales has nurtured his sound to the point where it has grown fat and sleek; unfortunately, he doesn't get much opportunity to display his witty solo side. Riley's time is firm and his touch is right.

Columbia has issued a brace of Monk albums by now. One was with big band; the others all quartet, trio, and solo. How about adding another horn next time? Like Ray Copeland, whom Monk really digs. —Morgenstern

Trudy Pitts

THESE BLUES OF MINE—Prestige 7538: *Organology*; *The House of the Rising Sun*; *Just Us Two*; *Eleanor Rigby*; *Count Nine*; *Man and Woman*; *A Whiter Shade of Pale*; *Teddy Makes Three*; *These Blues of Mine*; *What the World Needs Now*.

Personnel: Miss Pitts, organ; Pat Martino, guitar; Bill Carney, drums.

Rating: ★

No matter which way you slice it, Trudy Pitts is a bore. She doesn't swing, can't sing,