



# MONTREUX ALEXANDER

The Monty Alexander Trio  
**LIVE!**  
at the Montreux Festival

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Although this is Monty Alexander's seventh album he still - not counting the "Fungus" LP on which he accompanied his late friend and mentor Duke Ellington - it is the first to feature the very special trio which, over the last few years, has created just such an environment on tour in the USA and Europe. It is also the first to capture the trio in a live concert setting - an environment which all these musicians have always found most stimulating and conducive to their distinctive brand of spontaneous musical contribution. More than many other small groups, the Monty Alexander Trio has always drawn out of its creative energy from that potent kind of electricity which is generated by an appreciative audience. This process of mutual and progressive inspiration is one which those familiar with the Trio's live performances will have seen at operation time and time again, and the process was certainly operating at full intensity in Montreux on July 28, 1974 when Monty, John Clayton Jr. and Jeff Hamilton made their first appearance at a major European jazz festival.

From the opening track, Ahmad Jamal's "Wee Wee Blues" (a long time favourite theme of Monty's) to one of his favourite keyboard man's, the audience, applauding each staff of music and tempo, feels the pleasure of a double dose of enthusiasm and electricity.

Compared with the Thad Jones-led Laren Group, which preceded them, and the Stan Getz Quartet which followed them, the Monty Alexander Trio was something of an unknown quantity as far as most of the critically acclaiming audience seems concerned. Had they heard the Trio's music, however, they would have been more than ready to accept, welcome and appreciate, and as they warmed and responded to it, so the Trio reacted to them by producing a magnificent set, the highlights of which are presented on this LP.

As usual Alexander hadn't the remotest idea of the fame he was going to enjoy before he took the stage. But he did have a great urge to play - Montreux had been an ambition for some years - and was further encouraged by finding at his disposal what

he describes as "one of the best Yamaha grand's I've ever come across".

He did have a major clue about featuring the "Swing System Of The Saxophone" - some where in the set - and it is very possible that he had this in mind when he began the original piano entry that eventually leads into "Wee Wee Blues". It is typical of the spontaneity of Monty's music that half way through the entry a new idea took over - happily, as it happens, because "Wee Wee Blues" is a winner all the way, and the Battle hymn theme is repeated close to the unique sequence of numbers which make up the second side of this LP.

"Feeling", one of those contemporary pop tunes which has been widely adopted by jazz musicians, was incorporated into a set the first had played in Boston's Jazz Workshop, a couple of weeks before Montreux, with guitarist Barney Kessel, who had introduced them to the tune. And "Take Care" - all Monty says goes on for ever and ever as one of the great jazz vehicles.

PRODUCTION BY WILLI FRITZE  
Recorded at the Montreux Festival  
June 30, 1974  
Recording engineer: John Tesorczyk  
Recording location: Mountain Recording Studio, Montreux  
Recording director: Will Fritze  
Cover design: E.C.S.A.  
Cover photo: David Rostrom

Monty Alexander - piano  
John Clayton Jr. - drums  
Jeff Hamilton - bass

Side 1  
Wee Wee Blues 1:30  
Fungus 1:30  
Take Care 1:30  
John Clayton Jr. - solo 1:30

Side 2  
Battle Hymn 1:30  
Swing System Of The Saxophone 1:30  
Take Care 1:30  
John Clayton Jr. - solo 1:30

"Take pleasure" he adds, "in doing things that everybody does and trying to do them a little bit different". "I like "Swing System" quite as an idea a lot of "Things Are I Wish They Were To Be" - amongst the other bits here" and a touch of "Fungus" is brought into the mix, more important, seems like a deliberate parenthesis as it leads directly to a high pitch of excitement!

"Work Song" the Nat Asbury original arranged here by John Clayton, is one which Monty has often played with Matt Jackson and Ray Brown, and "Come On My Own Team", arranged by Monty, is the kind of ground-fogged piece for which he has an innate feel.

But it is the Battle hymn, here given a fairly short work-out, that really epitomises the happy, hard-driving, infectious, swinging and exuberant music of the Monty Alexander Trio.

"When I approached Monty for some background to this Montreux session, he said, 'Don't write too much about the music - just let it speak for itself!'

Certainly the music speaks for more eloquently than I could ever hope to do, but I cannot and there never will be, underlining the special importance of this LP. It is simply that it features a genuine and - more modestly - virtuosic musician who enjoys each other's music - and not simply a technically-minded player with rhythm accompaniment. This is the best Monty Alexander Trio yet, and on this its debut album, the work of Jeff Hamilton and John Clayton Jr. throughout is - as ever - exemplary -

Monty Alexander - piano  
John Clayton Jr. - drums  
Jeff Hamilton - bass

Other Monty Alexander albums on MFP:  
Love & Sunshine  
Monty Sings Again (Unreleased) (over)



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**MONTREUX ALEXANDER**

THE MONTY ALEXANDER TRIO  
LIVE!

AT THE MONTREUX FESTIVAL

- 1. WORK SONG 13:36 (Nat. Adderley/Brown)
- 2. DROWN IN MY OWN TEARS 4:00 (Glover)
- 3. BATTLE HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC 4:33  
(Trad./Alexander)

Arranged by Monty Alexander

33

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