



Pure Pleasure CS 8838

Thelonious Monk: Criss-Cross

Format: 1LP 180g 33rpm / standard sleeve

Release date: 25.04.2017

Manufacturer: Pure Pleasure Original label: Columbia Genre: Jazz

"Criss-Cross" - Thelonious Monk's second album for Columbia Records – features some of the finest work that Monk ever did in the studio with his '60s trio and quartet. Whether revisiting pop standards or reinventing Monk's own classic compositions, Monk and Charlie Rouse (tenor sax), John Ore (bass), and Frankie Dunlop (drums) exchange powerful musical ideas, as well as provide potent solos throughout the disc. Fittingly, "Hackensack" - a frenetic original composition - opens the disc by demonstrating the bandleader's strength in a quartet environment. The solid rhythmic support of the trio unfetters Monk into unleashing endless cascades of percussive inflections and intoxicating chord progressions. The title cut also reflects the ability of the four musicians to maintain melodic intricacies that are at times so exigent it seems cruel that Monk would have expected a musician of any caliber to pull them off. "Tea for Two" showcases Monk's appreciation for the great stride or 'walking' piano style of James P. Johnson and Willie 'The Lion' Smith. The arrangement here is lighter, and features a trio (minus Rouse) to accent rather than banter with Monk's splashes of magnificence throughout. Likewise, Monk's solo on "Don't Blame Me" is excellent. The extended runs up and down the keyboard can't help but reiterate the tremendous debt of gratitude owed to the original stride pianists of the early 20th century. This is prime Monk for any degree of listener. Lindsay Planer/AMG "Criss-Cross"

- Thelonious Monk (p); Charlie Rouse (ts); John Ore (b); Frankie Dunlop (dr)