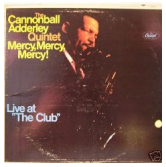
Cannonball Adderley – Mercy, Mercy, Mercy! Live At The 'Club' (1966)



1. Fun 8:26 2. Games 7:19 3. Mercy, Mercy, Mercy 5:10 4. Sticks 3:54 5. Hippodelphia 5:49 6. Sack O' Woe 10:29 Cannonball Adderley - Alto saxophone, leader Nat Adderley - Cornet Joe Zawinul - Piano, Wurlitzer electric piano Victor Gaskin - Bass Roy McCurdy - Drums

Cannonball Adderley's most popular album, Mercy, Mercy, Mercy wasn't actually recorded "Live at 'The Club'," as its subtitle says. The hoax was meant to publicize a friend's nightclub venture in Chicago, but Adderley actually recorded the album in Los Angeles, where producer David Axelrod set up a club in the Capitol studios and furnished free drinks to an invitation-only audience. Naturally, the crowd is in an extremely good mood, and Adderley's quintet, feeding off the energy in the room, gives them something to shout about. By this point, Adderley had perfected a unique blend of earthy soul-jazz and modern, subtly advanced post-bop; very rarely did some of these harmonies and rhythms pop up in jazz so saturated with blues and gospel feeling. Those latter influences are the main inspiration for acoustic/electric pianist Joe Zawinul's legendary title cut, a genuine Top 40 pop hit that bears a passing resemblance to the Southern soul instrumentals of the mid-'60s, but works a looser, more laid-back groove (without much improvisation). The deep, moaning quality and spacy texture of "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy" stand in contrast to the remainder of the record, though; Nat Adderley contributes two upbeat and challenging originals in "Fun" and "Games," while Zawinul's second piece, "Hippodelphia," is on the same level of sophistication. The leader's two selections -- the gospel-inflected "Sticks" and the hard-swinging, bluesy bop of "Sack O' Woe" (the latter of which became a staple of his repertoire) -- are terrific as well, letting the group really dig into its roots. Adderley's irrepressible exuberance was a major part of his popularity, and no document captures that quality as well -- or with such tremendous musical rewards -- as Mercy, Mercy, Mercy. ---Steve Huey, Rovi

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