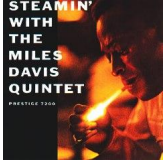


Miles Davis - Steamin' with the Miles Davis Quintet (1956)

Written by bluesever

Monday, 19 October 2009 16:16 - Last Updated Tuesday, 10 February 2015 23:29

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1. *Surrey With The Fringe On Top* 2. *Salt Peanuts* 3. *Something I Dreamed Last Night* 4. *Diane* 5. *Well, You Needn't* 6. *When I Fall In Love* Musicians: Miles Davis – trumpet
John Coltrane – tenor saxophone Red Garland – piano Paul Chambers – bass Philly Joe Jones – drums

Was this the greatest small jazz group ever? What can be said for a classic that has not already been said? Damn Little, I think. But perhaps a little history is in order. Steamin' was part of two marathon recording sessions (May 11, 1956 and October 26, 1956) undertaken by the first great Miles Davis Quintet to complete their contractual obligation to Prestige records before the group moved to Columbia records. Rather than present new material in these sessions, Davis elected to record the bands Book for the past number of years. This provided the listener with a complete and thoroughly practiced and executed document of the quintet in transition, on its way to becoming the most famous small jazz combo in history.

All selections on Steamin', save for Monk's "Well, You Needn't" were recorded at the first session. They are all performed with a nonchalant effortlessness that betrays the experience the band has with this familiar material. "Surrey with the Fringe on Top" from Rodgers and Hammerstein's Oklahoma! is an example of the unlikely material Davis was to include in his Book. The sound quality is now so refined following remastering that one can hear John Coltrane moving on-mike for his solo. The warmth of the Van Gelder Studio is surprisingly well retained by the digital transfer. "Salt Peanuts," left over from Davis' Be Bop days is wholly complimented by Jones' aggressive drumming. Davis is muted on "Something I Dreamed Last Night" as he was on the opener, defining what would become the most identifiable trumpet sound of the 1950s.

There is no highlight on this recording or the other four recordings that resulted from these two

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sessions. They are collectively the highlight of the first phase of the first great Miles Davis Quintet, captured here more crisply and accurately than on any previous release of this music. ---C. Michael Bailey, allaboutjazz.com

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