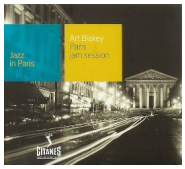
Art Blakey - Jazz in Paris: Paris Jam Session (1959/2000)



1. Dance of the Infidels 12:27 2. Bouncing With Bud 11:38 3. The Midget 11:04 4. A Night In Tunisia 07:04 Alto Saxophone – Barney Wilen (tracks: 1, 2) Bass – Jymie Merritt Piano – Bud Powell (tracks: 1, 2), Walter Davis Jr. (tracks: 3, 4) Tenor Saxophone – Wayne Shorter Trumpet – Lee Morgan Drums – Art Blakey

This 1959 concert in Paris by Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers has been sporadically available on various labels, but this reissue in Verve's Jazz in Paris series is the best sounding and best packaged of the lot. Blakey's group of this period (Lee Morgan, Wayne Shorter, Jymie Merritt, and Walter Davis, Jr.) is in great form during an extended workout of Morgan's intense blues "The Midget," and Dizzy Gillespie's timeless "A Night in Tunisia" is kicked off by Blakey's an electrifying solo. But it is the addition of some special guests for the first two numbers that proves to be extra special. Bud Powell, sitting in for Davis, and French saxophonist Barney Wilen, on alto rather than his normal tenor sax, are both added to the band for inspired versions of Powell's "Dance of the Infidels" and "Bouncing with Bud." Morgan's trumpet playing is outstanding throughout the concert. This is one of the essential live dates in Art Blakey's rather extensive discography. --- Ken Dryden, Rovi

The Jazz Messengers were widely recorded during their stay in Paris... Paris Jam Session is a live album by Art Blakey & the Jazz Messengers with guest appearances by Bud Powell and Barney Wilen, recorded at the Theâtre des Champs Elysées in Paris on December the 18th, 1959. It was originally released by Fontana in 1961, and subsequently by Verve as part of their Jazz in Paris series. It ends with one of the most stunning versions of the Dizzy Gillespie standard Night in Tunisia, the perfect vehicle for the explosive drummer to demonstrate his exceptional talents. --- loshermnosbrothers.blogspot.com

Wayne Shorter describes this show in his biography "Footprints:"

[Bud Powell's friend and helper Francis] Paudras invited Bud to the Messengers show that night, unaware that his friend was actually already on the bill. In the middle of the show, Walt Davis, Jr., the Messengers' pianist, stepped up to the mike and asked Bud to come onstage. Bud wasn't exactly eager to play. He sank down into his chair and tried in vain to use his trademark beret and overcoat for camouflage, but his fans picked him out right away. Paudras prodded him, the audience clamored, and finally Art enticed him onstage. "All I could think was, we're playing with Bud Powell now, this is Bud Powell onstage," Wayne said. "I was thinking of his music, and what he always played himself, and how to respond to that." The Messengers honored their guest pianist by calling two of his tunes: "Bouncing With Bud" and "Dance of the Infidels."

The Champs-Elysees audience caught Bud on a good night. With concentration, he shunned inspiration and played straight, giving a crowd-pleasing performance - though no matter how Bud Played, he was bound to be the night's sentimental favorite. More impressive musicianship actually came from the Messengers' two horn players. Only a few months into Wayne's tenure with the band, he and Lee Morgan had settled into the front line as comfortably as an old married couple: They formed a striking contrast, a musical yin and yang.

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