



THE MODERN JAZZ QUARTET

Germany 1956 & 1958

LOST TAPES

CHANGE YOUR ATTITUDE

Who would have thought this quartet would confound revolutions in fashion and survive for 40 years? And that it would achieve widespread popularity in Europe in 1957? The conquest of the general public by these four gentlemen was more an act of seduction. In 1946 drummer Kenny Clarke created the opportunity for his friend John Lewis to join Dizzy Gillespie's orchestra. Here Lewis replaced Thelonious Monk on the piano for two years before heading with Kenny to Paris for a few months. John Lewis had worked in New York with Charlie Parker and thanks to him was writing arrangements for the now legendary nonet of Miles Davis. John, Kenny and vibraphonist Milt Jackson formed Dizzy's rhythm section; this trio was to form the nucleus which in 1952 gave rise to the Modern Jazz Quartet (MJQ). The pianist with the velvet touch had been much in demand for studio sessions while still a student at the Manhattan School of Music. Milt said, "John didn't want to be a sideman to me and I didn't want to be one to him. It was all about partnership." The sound director had found his lead performer. Bass player Ray Brown was replaced by former US fighter pilot Percy Heath, and from 1955 Connie Kay came in on drums for Kenny Clarke.

At the time of these recordings, John Lewis was still in the process of developing the unique concept of MJQ as a jazz chamber group, for which he often scored even the bass and drum parts. The cosmopolitan Lewis successfully exploited a wide variety of source material (folksong, counterpoint, standards etc.) to develop new structures and create a style of jazz that was free of cliché and would ultimately prove timeless. “Change your attitude” was the MJQ motto. Jazz to them was more than mere chance music, loose jamming and a lot of swing: it called for new and innovative approaches. Change was tangible also in their outward appearance – the four musicians wore tuxedos – and in the way they filed onto the stage. Everything was choreographed, exuded dignity. As a pianist, composer and arranger, John Lewis was enormously productive even then, writing music for TV, theatre and ballet. His international success with **Django** gave him the opportunity to compose his first film score for Roger Vadim, “Sait-on Jamais” (“No Sun in Venice”). The MJQ had by then become a collective with strictly defined roles: Lewis (music), Jackson (PR), Heath (finance) and Kay (transport). The fact that Lewis, the man of ideas, was every inch an equal to his partner Jackson, the great improviser, is clearly audible in these tracks. In **Ralph’s New Blues** (written by Jackson for the critic Ralph J. Gleason in 1955), for example, there is formal sophistication in the way he leads in and out of his own solo.

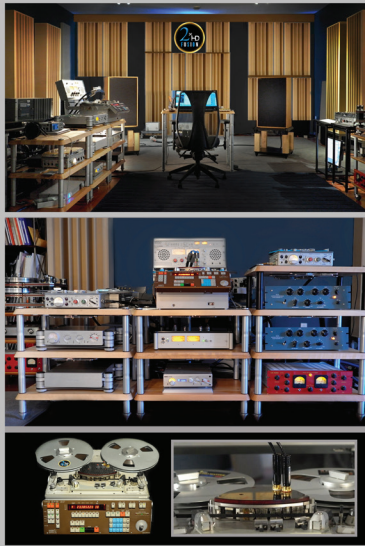
The 18th-century English Christmas carol, **God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen** is even mentioned in the works of Charles Dickens – an unusual choice, perhaps, for a jazz ensemble with bebop roots. But what MJQ did with well-known standards was so unique that many of their versions remained in the quartet's repertoire for decades. During a studio break following TV recordings, Joachim-Ernst Berendt, the dedicatee of **J.B. Blues**, asked vibes player Milt Jackson if he had ever recorded a piece on his own without rhythm section, citing "Picasso", the celebrated unaccompanied solo by Coleman Hawkins. No, came Milt's reply, but we could try. He opted for **Tenderly**. When Berendt asked him to shorten the vibrato, Milt told him that Sidney Bechet's vibrato had been even longer and no one worried about that. The MJQ became a laboratory for a chamber-music style of jazz. Soon they were regularly inviting soloists like Paul Desmond, Jimmy Giuffre and Sonny Rollins, later on the group even worked with symphony orchestras. But every track of this pioneering early phase exemplifies how John Lewis, to quote André Francis, turned four musicians into "a sensitive instrument which vibrates in the same universe of sound, achieving a communion unique in the world of jazz."







THE 2xHD MASTERING PROCESS



The 2xHD proprietary mastering provides a unique listening experience as the process digs deep in original recordings to bring out all hidden information, without altering the music in any way, uncovering and bringing out nuances, warmth, depth of field and even the air around the musicians.

The 2xHD logo on an album cover indicates that the recording was carefully selected and the high resolution mastering was done using the 2xHD process. Created by producer/studio owner André Perry and prize-winning audiophile sound engineer René Laflamme in collaboration with several high-end audio equipment manufacturers, the 2xHD music remastering system combines the best of vintage analog with state-of-the-art DSD and DXD digital technology – a 'Back to the Future' approach. Each musical project is treated with individual attention to the selection of equipment.

Some of the top flight gear used in the process includes a selection of cutting-edge A/D and D/A converters to obtain the most natural DSD or PCM sound, such as a NAGRA-T tape recorder - modified with all tubes playback electronics (With its four direct drive motors and the tape sensor head, The NAGRA-T is one of the best transports ever made), a modified vacuum tube NAGRA HD dac (DSD) to make it possible to obtain real analog sound from a digital master and in some cases even battery power is used so as to benefit from the cleanest power source possible. The 2xHD FUSION mastering system is powered by super capacitor power supplies with new technology that lowers the digital noise which is heard in the lowest levels, something that was not possible before. The resulting signal is then transformed to high resolution formats by recording it in DSD 256 kHz using the Merging Technologies' Horus A to D converter - which is also powered by a super capacitor power supply. All analog and digital cables are the finest state of the art available today. Also used in the process are Pyramix Masscore (records all high resolution formats, allowing for great flexibility), an Atomic Clock for re-clocking, and Siltech & Shunyata cables (all digital and analog cables are reduced to a minimum optimal length in the digital conversion and mastering system).

The particular open sound and feeling of having no ceiling to the music are obtained through the 2xHD high resolution transfer. In the case of an original analog master tapes, transfer to DSD 256. In the case of an original 96/24 or DXD/DSD master, transfer is made to analogue using cutting edge D/A converters.

2xHD is an accurate and musical mastering system, earning recognition from peers and from the specialized trade publications around the world.

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Pure Emotion

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- 1 **RALPH'S NEW BLUES** MILT JACKSON 4:38
- 2 **GOD REST YE MERRY, GENTLEMEN** (TRADITIONAL) 5:03
- 3 **WILLOW WEEP FOR ME** ANN RONELL 4:07 4 **I'LL REMEMBER APRIL** GENE DE PAUL 4:10
- 5 **YOU GO TO MY HEAD** J. FRED COOTS 5:13
- 6 **I CAN'T GET STARTED** VERNON DUKE 3:03 7 **TENDERLY** WALTER GROSS 3:07
- 8 **J.B. BLUES** JOHN LEWIS 5:11

Studio Recording Villa Berg, SDR Stuttgart: 1–4 October 26, 1956

Studio Recording SWF Baden-Baden: 5–8 October, 1958

John Lewis (p)^{1-4,8} / Milt Jackson (vib)¹⁻⁷ / Percy Heath (b)^{1-4,8} / Connie Kay (dr)^{1-4,8}

ORIGINAL MUSIC RECORDINGS PRODUCED BY Dieter Zimmerle & Joachim-Ernest Berendt
CONDUCTOR: Fabian Groh (1957-1975) / Karl Lippig (1976-1978) / Alan Saxon (1979-1981)

2xHD MASTERING: RENÉ LAFLAMME
2xHD EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: ANDRÉ PERRY

