

FROM ORIGINAL ANALOG MASTER

2^xHD
FUSION

ART BLAKEY

AND THE
JAZZ MESSENGERS

Sängerhalle Untertürkheim
July 15, 1978



Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers

Recorded live at S ngerhalle Untert rkheim, July 15, 1978

A Great Day in Stuttgart

The "Jazz Messengers", the ensemble created by the drummer Art Blakey, has been described as the true university, the post-graduate college of jazz. For if Blakey ever began repeating himself, he would shuffle the musicians in his hand around, replacing experienced players with highly talented novices. It was a strategy that kept him young – while everyone else grew old. The man known as the Jazz Tiger for his attacking style, was also the great vampire of jazz: not unlike the much less transparent bandleader Miles Davis, the drummer was constantly in search of "fresh blood." If anyone who had ever played with the Messengers had turned up to play the same gig, they would without doubt have created the best big band of all time. And if they had posed for a group portrait, then it would have had to hang alongside the existing and definitive jazz group portrait. Art Kane's "A Great Day in Harlem" from 1958. Kane's picture captures 57 of the leading jazz musicians of their day (possibly of any day), posing outside a house in Harlem. Among them, naturally, is Art Blakey. But our focus is on a Great Day in Stuttgart: Saturday, 15 July 1978. The 58-year-old Blakey, a man of cheerful extravagance and a convivial host, gave a guest performance at the S ngerhalle in Untert rkheim, the suburb of Stuttgart better known for its wine and car production. The ambience was fantastic. And having just undergone a blood replacement, Blakey's ensemble was rejuvenated. Blakey was joined on stage by Russian-born trumpeter, now US citizen, Valery Ponomarev. David Schnitter (tenor). Bobby Watson (alto). James Williams (piano) and Dennis Irwin (bass). Having survived Blakey's baptism by fire, they all committed themselves to a life-time of jazz. Today Ponomarev is 71. David Schnitter 64 and Bobby Watson 60: these three remain active. James Williams died in 2004 at the age of 53. Dennis Irwin died in 2008 aged 56.

Max Roach, another jazz drum legend, once said that Art Blakey's style of drumming had been labelled "thunder" for good reason, and the recording of the Stuttgart concert reveals why: the thunder happens whenever one of his limbs begins to move independently and completely unfettered, as if serving a higher, magical precision: "that poly-rhythmic thing," Roach used to call it. My favourite track on this LP is Benny Golson's *I Remember Clifford*, an elegy for trumpeter Clifford Brown, who died in a car accident. Benny Golson was a member of the Jazz Messengers in the late 1950s for a short time only, but as composer he was the lynchpin of the Stuttgart concert, responsible also for the C-side track *Blues March*. Golson is also one of the three last surviving musicians who appeared on that "Great Day in Harlem" group photo of 1958 (the other two being Sonny Rollins and Horace Silver). Art Blakey died on 10 October 1990. Golson's is, if you like, the hidden storyline of Steven Spielberg's 2004 box-office hit "Terminal": a movie about a man, played by Tom Hanks, whose ambition is to collect the autographs of all musicians pictured on the group photo "A Great Day in Harlem". Although he already had Blakey's signature, he was missing Golson's, so he travelled to New York without valid documentation and was held for nine months at the city's JFK airport. If one were to broaden the focus of this film just a little, it would bring into view Art Blakey, the man to whom jazz owes many of its key developments, drumrolls and background stories. So how fortunate we are to have this LP that delivers a short Untert rkheim excerpt in jazz history. It was one day in summer 36 years ago – it was a Great Day in Stuttgart.

Side A (21:11)

1 **Jodi**

WALTER DAVIS / 10:30

2 **Body & Soul**

JOHN W. GREEN / 10:34

Side B (21:10)

3 **Mishima**

DAVID SCHNITTER / 13:50

4 **Moanin'**

BOBBY THIMMONS / 7:19

Side C (19:10)

5 **Blues March**

BENNY GOLSON / 10:20

6 **I Remember Clifford**

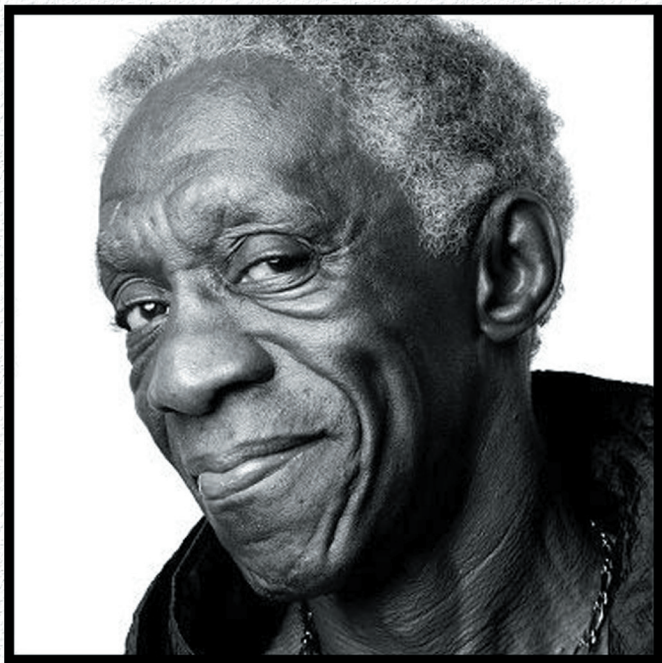
BENNY GOLSON / 8:56

Side D (19:25)

7 **Hawk Man**

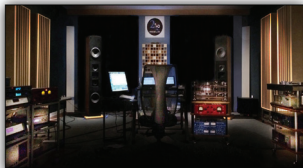
ROBERT WATSON / 19:25

Art Blakey (dr), Valery Ponomarev (tp), David Schnitter (ts), Bobby Watson (as), James Williams (p), Dennis Irwin (b)





THE 2xHD FUSION MASTERING SYSTEM



In the constant evolution of its proprietary mastering process, 2xHD has progressed to a new phase called 2xHD FUSION, integrating the finest analog, with state-of-the-art digital technology.

The mastering chain consists of a selection of high-end vacuum tube equipment. For the recordings on this album, the original ¼" 15 ips CCIR master tapes were played on a Nagra-T tape recorder, modified with high-end tube playback electronics, wired with OCC silver cable from the playback head direct to a Nick Doshi tube head preamplifier. The Nagra T, with its four direct drive motors, two pinch rollers and a tape tension head, has one of the best transports ever made. A custom-built carbon fiber head block and a head damping electronic system permit 2xHD FUSION to obtain a better resolution and 3D imaging.

The resulting signal is then transferred into high resolution formats by recording it in DSD 11.2 MHz using a Merging Technologies' Horus A to D converter. All analog and digital cables that are used are state of the art. The 2xHD FUSION mastering system is powered by a super capacitor power supply, using a new technology that lowers the digital noise found in the lowest level of the spectrum. A vacuum tube NAGRA HDdac (DSD) is used as a reference digital playback converter in order to A and B with the original analog master tape, permitting the fusion of the warmth of analog with the refinement of digital.

2xHD was created by producer/studio owner André Perry and audiophile sound engineer René Laflamme.

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