

Reviewing art blakey and the jazz messenger's moanin

Technology, Information Technology



Jazz Album Review Moanin'

Art Blakey is undoubtedly one of the greatest Jazz drummers of all time, and together with his talented group, The Jazz Messengers, they collaborated to create my favorite Jazz album: Moanin'. Released in January 1959, Moanin' was an album released by the label Blue Note that pushed the limits on the Jazz genre with its originality, and bold approach. The genre of the album is categorized as hard bop, probably due to the style of Art Blakey's drumming, which seems to be the focus of this entire album. It is nice to hear songs that focus so heavily on the drums, and Art Blakey's style proves that there is much more to the drums than swing rhythms and keeping time.

This album consists of Art Blakey on the drums, and it also features his group the Jazz Messengers consisting of Lee Morgan on the trumpet, Benny Golson on tenor sax, Bobby Timmons on piano, and Jymie Merritt on the bass. The album contains only one standard, "Come Rain or Come Shine", and all the other songs on the album are originals.

Completely different from any song I've ever heard, "Blues March" does exactly what the title implies. Art Blakey cleverly tucks in drum rudiments on the snare drum accompanied by a modified swing rhythm. The song begins with a snare solo, filled with ruffs, open stroke rolls, and triplets that keep the feel of a march, but have a slight swing feel that is common with triplets. The band makes a strong entrance into the chorus, and the instruments seem to create an image of a group of soldiers marching in after a victory. This entrance almost takes you by surprise, since the opening snare drum

solo contrasts so much with the swing style of the chorus. Art Blakey's swing style consists of playing the ride, snare and hi-hat on beats one, two, three, and four, which is a strange approach, but works perfectly for the song. His fills are made up of snare rolls and rudiments, which seem to compliment the song perfectly. The first solo goes to the trumpet, followed by the alto sax, then the piano, and last but not least, the drums. The soloists blend the elements of a march and swing to create solos that are simplistic but still manage to add an interesting dynamic to the unique style of the song.

My personal favorite on the album is the song is "The Drum Thunder Suite", because the entire song is basically one amazing drum solo. The song has an eerie and slow beginning, but it quickly picks up the tempo, and Art Blakey keeps time by playing the hi-hat on beats two and four, and just does rolls on the tom-toms for the entire piece until he switches to a swing rhythm for a couple measures. The first solo goes to the trumpet, then the tenor, then the piano and finally the drums, which is the same order as the other song; however, the styles are completely different in this tune. The instruments race to fit in a flash of fast notes and they experiment with many sounds that would be considered 'out' notes. The best parts of the song are the pauses, because when the band comes back in they completely switch up the style of the song. Art Blakey makes use of rim clicks to break the suspense of the first pause, but then returns to his use of the toms and hi-hat, which seem to be his main staple. He manages to stay on the toms for most of the piece, and keeps it interesting with his constant fluctuations between powerful rolls and hits.

Art Blakey never fails to impress, and Moanin' is no exception. As a drummer, I aspire to the style of Blakey's drumming, which consists of melodic solos that are a pleasure to listen to and daring rhythms that make for interesting and distinctive songs. Out of the eight albums that I've reviewed since my freshman year in Jazz Band, this album is by far my favorite and it would get an 11 out of 10 if I had to rate it on a scale of 1 to 10. The musicians on this album have a vibe that you can feel in the music, and it makes for an incredible album. Art Blakey is a drummer that I personally look up to, and has a flair that I believe every drummer should try to add to his/her style of playing. It was truly a pleasure listening to this album, but the joy was bittersweet when I realized that this would be my last Jazz Collateral. One thing is for certain; I couldn't have picked a better album to finish with.