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FUSION

ARCHIE
SHEPP

and the
NEW YORK
CONTEMPORARY FIVE

STORYVILLE

On this record is heard a new American jazz group. Certainly one of the most important in recent years and yet one with which the American jazz public has had almost no opportunity of getting acquainted. It was formed with a special view to an engagement in Copenhagen, as no club in New York would, in 1963, be interested in sustaining a group like this during its formative period. Also, its first recordings were made during that stay in Copenhagen, as almost no American record companies could, in 1963, be persuaded to invest in music of this kind.

We are thus facing a situation unknown in the history of jazz up till now, a situation where important developments take place outside of the United States. In particular, the Jazzhus Montmartre in Copenhagen seems to be out to becoming something like the Minton's Play House of the 'sixties. This club also had the Cecil Taylor Trio in residence for a whole month in late 1962, during which period Taylor made what were at the time of writing his only known records in more than two years.

The New York Contemporary Five would seem to be the first permanently organized ensemble to follow the path of those two pioneers of the so-called "new thing", Ornette Coleman and Cecil Taylor. It will be noted that its personnel unites that important voice from



the original Coleman quartet, Don Cherry, and one of the most gifted soloists that have played with Taylor, Archie Shepp. On the other hand, judging from the repertory of the group, it would seem that its main inspirators are Coleman and Thelonious Monk.

Generally speaking, the work of the quintet is not so much of a pioneering as of a consolidating kind, but the compositions from within the group as well as the solos show that the musicians work with personal authority and confidence in this newly discovered but still quite unexplored areas. Another interesting aspect of this quintet is that it is the first permanent "new thing" group containing three horns, a fact that makes for new possibilities in the ensemble work.

The quintet as such was formed in the summer of 1963. At that time John Tchicai had, for some months, been working with the group of Archie Shepp and trumpeter Bill Dixon, which also contained bassist Don Moore. When the plan of an engagement in Copenhagen came up at Tchicai's instigation, Don Cherry took over from Dixon and later J.C. Moses became the drummer of the group. The quintet rehearsed for a couple of months and made an appearance at Harout's in Greenwich Village, on which occasion - according to LeRoi Jones in *Down Beat* - "it showed the potential of becoming one of the most exciting groups anywhere". On September 3, 1963, the NYCF opened at the Jazzhus Montmartre where it played for two weeks in September and three in October. In early November, it was heard at the Golden Circle in Stockholm, and in between these engagements it visited Danish and Swedish provincial towns and took part in several radio and television programmes for some time after which, when four of its members returned to New York, Shepp stayed on for a further engagement at the Montmartre.

The musicians that make up the NYCF all belong to the same age group, two of them being born in 1936 and three in 1937.

Don Cherry

(Born November 18, 1936 in Oklahoma City) is probably the best known, having played with Ornette Coleman between 1957 and 1961 and with Sonny Rollins (including a European tour) in 1962 and '63. On this record, he is playing a battered cornet which dates back to the time of the Civil War.

Archie Shepp

(Born May 24, 1937, in Philadelphia) worked with Cecil Taylor in 1960 and '61 and then joined forces with Bill Dixon. In the summer of 1962, their group took part in the World Youth Festival in Helsinki, Finland. Shepp has recorded with Taylor and with the Shepp-Dixon Quartet.

John Tchicai

(Born April 28, 1936 in Copenhagen) was the most controversial musician in Danish jazz when he migrated to New York in December 1962. He had played at the Helsinki festival with a Danish group and had met Archie Shepp, so once in New York he quickly gained admittance to the Shepp-Dixon circles. Tchicai claims to be inspired by Cecil Taylor rather than by Coleman, and in fact his alto playing is remarkably different from Coleman's. Apart from a local LP made at the Polish jazz festival in the autumn of 1962, this is Tchicai's first record.

Don Moore

(Born August 14, 1937 in Philadelphia) has mainly been active as a member of the Shepp-Dixon group with which he also recorded.

John Curtis Moses

(Born August 10, 1937 in Pittsburgh) has mostly been associated with Eric Dolphy since coming to New York and has recorded with Dolphy, Kenny Dorham and Clifford Jordan.

The record opens with the first number that was played on the night of recording, a theme by Don Cherry titled Cisum (music spelled backwards). Like most of the other material in the NYCF-book, this tune was arranged by Bill Dixon and like many of Ornette Coleman's tunes it is in an AABA-form without adhering to a fixed tempo or number of bars. The solos, which follow the exposition of the fanfare-like theme, are played in fast tempo and free form, the cornet using a kind of "Spanish wall", the alto working around a few repeated motifs, while the tenor departs from a recurring Sonny Boy quote and generally has a touch of Rollins. The final solo features the drums spurred on by the cornet.

Crepescule with Nellie (Twilight with Mrs. Monk) is one of Thelonious Monk's later compositions, first recorded with a septet in 1957. It was arranged for the NYCF by trombonist Roswell Rudd and in this version consists of just the theme played through once with no solos. Shepp's tenor part in some places has a fat baritone sound and he will, in fact, admit that he is really "a frustrated baritone player".

O.C. (for Ornette Coleman) is the first recording of this Coleman theme. It was titled by Cherry, who got it from Coleman, and the arrangement is by Bill Dixon. The ten-bar theme is a kind of abbreviated minor blues and the solos use an eight-bar form. After the horns, Moore is featured in a walking bass solo.

When Will the Blues Leave? Another Coleman theme and one of his best-known from his debut album, recorded in 1958. This medium blues is the most "legitimate" of the tracks on this record, and we even hear a riff from *Walkin'* behind part of the cornet solo. Cherry plays nine choruses, Tchicai and Shepp eleven each, and Moses four.

Archie Shepp's *The Funeral* is dedicated to Medgar Evers, the NAACP secretary from Mississippi who was murdered by a white racist in June, 1963, shot down from behind outside his home as he got out of his car after having talked at a Negro mass meeting in Jackson. Actually, Shepp's composition was written and titled a couple of months before, but by coincidence it was performed on the evening of Evers' death. Most of this dirge is written out, including the ensemble introduction, which is by Bill Dixon, but Cherry's saeta-like lament, part of Tchicai's solo, and the bass solo are improvised. After the final, terror filled ensemble outburst, the music dies away with the tenor in a fittingly anti-climactic way.

Mick, finally, is a medium-tempoed minor blues by John Tchicai, arranged by Bill Dixon. It is named after the daughter of Max Brüel, the excellent Danish saxophone player and former companion of Tchicai, and the theme has a certain George Russell flavour. The solos by the three horns do not follow a strict chorus pattern. Tchicai is particularly successful in his solo in this number and shows a remarkably personal conception. The concluding theme statement is followed by a few bars of George Russell's *Ezz-thetic*, the NYCF signature tune.

-Erik Wiedermann

ARCHIE SHEPP AND THE NEW YORK CONTEMPORARY FIVE

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- 1 **CISUM** 11:10
(Don Cherry)
- 2 **CREPESCULE WITH NELLIE** 2:05
(Thelonius Monk)
- 3 **O.C.** 6:40
(Ornett Coleman)
- 4 **WHEN WILL THE BLUES LEAVE** 9:00
(Ornett Coleman)
- 5 **THE FUNERAL** 5:05
(Archie Shepp)
- 6 **MICK** 7:30
(John Tchicai)

Recorded November 15, 1963
at the Jazzhus Montmartre
in Copenhagen, Denmark

Don Cherry (cornet)
John Tchical (alto sax)
Archie Shepp (tenor sax)
Don Moore (bass)
J.C. Moses (drums)



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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