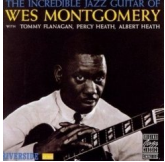


Wes Montgomery - The Incredible Jazz Guitar (1960)

Written by bluesever

Tuesday, 20 October 2009 14:31 - Last Updated Monday, 22 June 2015 13:27

Wes Montgomery - The Incredible Jazz Guitar (1960)



01 - *Airegin*

02 - *D-Natural Blues*

03 - *Polka Dots and Moonbeams*

04 - *Four on Six*

05 - *West Coast Blues*

06 - *In your own sweet Way*

07 - *Mr. Walker (Renie)*

08 - *Gone with the Wind*

Personnel: Wes Montgomery (guitar); Tommy Flanagan (piano); Percy Heath (bass); Albert Heath (drums).

The incredible Wes Montgomery of 1960 was more discernible and distinctive than the guitarist who would emerge a few years later as a pop stylist and precursor to George Benson in the '70s. On this landmark recording, Montgomery veered away from his home Indianapolis-based organ combo with Melvin Rhyne, the California-based Montgomery Brothers band, and other studio sidemen he had been placed with briefly. Off to New York City and a date with Tommy Flanagan's trio, Montgomery seems in his post- to hard bop element, swinging fluently with purpose, drive, and vigor not heard in an electric guitarist since bop progenitor Charlie Christian. Setting him apart from the rest, this recording established Montgomery as the most formidable modern guitarist of the era, and eventually its most influential. There's some classic material here, including the cat-quick but perhaps a trifle anxious version of the Sonny Rollins bop evergreen "Airegin," the famous repeated modal progressive and hard bop jam "Focus on Six," and Montgomery's immortal soul waltz "West Coast Blues," effortlessly rendered with its memorable melody and flowing, elegant chiffon-like lines. Flanagan, at a time shortly after leaving his native Detroit, is the perfect pianist for this session. He plays forcefully but never overtly so on the bop tracks, offering up his trademark delicacy on the laid-back "Polka Dots and Moonbeams" and easy-as-pie "Gone with the Wind." With the dynamic Philadelphia rhythm section of brothers Percy Heath on bass and drummer Albert Heath, they play a healthy Latin beat on the choppy and dramatic melody of Montgomery's original "Mr. Walker." Montgomery is

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clearly talented beyond convention, consistently brilliant, and indeed incredible in the company of his sidemen, and this recording -- an essential addition to every jazz guitarist fan's collection -- put him on the map. --- Michael G. Nastos, Rovi

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