

*Thelonious Monk  
with*

*Sonny  
Rollins  
and Frank Foster  
Prestige 7053*

# MONK

*and mullig*

**RVG**  
REMASTERS



MONK

# THELONIOUS MONK QUINTET

THELONIOUS MONK piano FRANK FOSTER tenor saxophone (#1-4)  
RAY COPELAND trumpet (#1-4) CURLY RUSSELL bass (#1-4) ART BLAKEY drums (#1-4)  
SONNY ROLLINS tenor saxophone (#5-7) JULIUS WATKINS French horn (#5-7)  
PERCY HEATH bass (#5-7) WILLIE JONES drums (#5-7)

1 WE SEE 5:18  
2 SMOKE GETS IN YOUR EYES 4:33  
3 LOCOMOTIVE 6:24  
4 HACKENSACK 5:11  
5 LET'S CALL THIS 5:08  
6 THINK OF ONE (TAKE 2) 5:47  
7 THINK OF ONE (TAKE 1) 5:40



*I remember the sessions well, I remember how the musicians wanted to sound, and I remember their reactions to the playbacks.  
Today, I feel strongly that I am their messenger. —RUDY VAN GELDER*

Recorded by RUDY VAN GELDER Van Gelder Studio, Hackensack, NJ; May 11, 1954 (except #5-7 recorded by Doug Hawkins in New York City; November 13, 1953).

Supervision by BOB WEINSTOCK (except #5-7 BY IRA GITLER) Remastering, 2009—RUDY VAN GELDER (Van Gelder Studio, Englewood Cliffs, NJ)

All transfers were made from the analog master tapes to digital at 24-bit resolution.

Notes by Ira Gitler

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The position of legendary figure is usually reserved for a deceased musician who has played two decades before. It usually requires this posthumous status and span of time, for the various stories concerning him to grow into a legend but it took a very much alive Thelonious Monk only five years to surround himself with an air of mystery and receive the title "High Priest of Bebop" in the Forties. Perhaps this element of weird glamour prevented many people from enjoying Monk's music to the fullest extent. Certainly he is always low man on the totem pole whenever the triumvirate of the founding fathers of bop is evaluated. This is due in part, no doubt, to the greater solo prowess of Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie, but Thelonious's contributions in time, chord patterns, and the original lines resulting from them were unjustly minimized. Actually they were the basis for much of the jazz of the Forties and Fifties.

Today he stands as an individual, a highly original musician who is the mentor of many young musicians in New York and the influence of countless others all over the globe. In his writing and playing, he consistently proves his right to the often misapplied title of creator.

November 13, 1953 was a Friday. At WOR Studios preparations were being made for the recording date that would soon commence. Julius Watkins, who had been called in as a last minute replacement for an ailing Ray Copeland, warmed up in muted tones. Percy Heath and Willie Jones made

separate entrances and soon the scheduled two o'clock starting time was clearly indicated by the studio wall-clock (a constant visual magnet at most recording sessions) without there being a sign of Thelonious Monk or Sonny Rollins. Someone half-laughed, "Friday the Thirteenth," and there followed much pacing, more clock watching, and a few phone calls. In the neighborhood of three o'clock, Monk and Sonny arrived. Their cab had rammed the rear of a motorcycle, causing no physical injury but considerably delaying the affairs of the afternoon and adding greatly to the usual anxieties of recording. From then on it was a battle against the red second hand with the fact that Julius had not seen the music before, another handicap. Any accomplished musician should have no trouble sight-reading and Julius didn't but there was the matter of getting the feel of the tune and its chord changes which is something never to be achieved with celerity, unless by someone of Charlie Parker's ilk.

Despite the obstacles, three tunes were cut with the third ending just before the studio closed for the day.

"Friday the Thirteenth," which is not heard here, will be reissued at a later date.

"Let's Call This" a languid, rolling line with solos of extended length by Sonny, Julius, and Thelonious.

"Think of One" is opened solo wise by Monk, followed by Sonny and Julius. Then Monk chords another bit with Percy coming through strongly. Both takes are presented here. In

# MONK

WE SEE • SMOKE GETS IN YOUR EYES  
LOCOMOTIVE • HACKENSACK  
LET'S CALL THIS • THINK OF ONE (TAKE 2)  
THINK OF ONE (TAKE 1)

take 2, the line is played better. Take 1 has superior solos.

The spring date found Monk with an entirely new personnel surrounding him.

From the ranks of Count Basie's band, tenorman Frank Foster brought his lilting swing and hard sound. Frank is a devotee of Sonny Stitt but not a slavish imitator. His vibrant solos which stand out in Count's band are even more effective in the small group. He is not like certain big band musicians who become fish out of water when asked to play sustained choruses.

Ray Copeland, who had missed the previous quintet session, was on the scene for this one. He had been associated with Monk before but this was his first important recording date. His style is a happy combination of Dizzy, blues, and undertones of swing with a fresh sweetness that is never cloying.

Art Blakey, one of the all-time greats of jazz history, has been Monk's rhythmic partner on numerous records and in-person appearances. Monk's music leaves the openings that Art's special grammar seems to punctuate so well.

One of the solid rocks in contemporary rhythm, Curly Russell rounds out the group with his big sound and articulate notes.

"We See" is a Monk original that moves along with power by Blakey and Russell. Monk opens the solo proceedings followed by Foster and Copeland. Then Frank comes

back with some after thoughts.

"Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" was, like Ray Copeland, expected but unheard at the Friday the thirteenth session. Monk has fashioned a simple, poignant arrangement in which the band plays organ and he weaves his solo statement of the melody through the loom of their sound. Then it becomes property of the trio with Monk the lone voice. The band comes in again briefly for the close.

"Locomotive" is a distant relation to the "train blues" of the past insofar as its rhythmic figure not its chord progressions. Monk, Copeland, and Foster solo with Ray and Frank negotiating some effective double-timing during each one's solo with the help of Art Blakey. Thelonious comes back for a very rhythmic bit with Art utilizing various sounds to comment with.

"Hackensack" is a tribute to engineer Rudy Van Gelder and that particular section of New Jersey where his studio is located. Monk plays with wit and drive. Then Frank Foster best illustrates those qualities I described earlier. Ray Copeland keeps it right in the swinging vein and Art Blakey plays a solo that will lift you right out of your seat.

— IRA GITLER

*These notes appeared on  
the original album liner.*

**I WAS THE ENGINEER** on the recording sessions and I also made the masters for the original LP issues of these albums. Since the advent of the CD, other people have been making the masters. Mastering is the final step in the process of creating the sound of the finished product. Now, thanks to the folks at the Concord Music Group who have given me the opportunity to remaster these albums, I can present my versions of the music on CD using modern technology. I remember the sessions well, I remember how the musicians wanted to sound, and I remember their reactions to the playbacks. Today, I feel strongly that I am their messenger. —RUDY VAN GELDER

## MONK

## REVISITED

**IN MY ORIGINAL NOTES** I told the story of how the music was made (and how it was named) in the studio on the afternoon of November 13, 1953. I mentioned the piece called “Friday the Thirteenth” and that it would be reissued at a later date. It can now be found on *Thelonious Monk/Sonny Rollins* (Prestige PRC-30010-2).

As I have already described both sessions—fall 1953 when I was the producer and spring 1954 when I was not even in attendance—I’d like to take this opportunity to talk about Monk as I knew him or, should I say, experienced him. It began, appropriately, with hearing “Round Midnight,” his most well known, widely played, recorded and durable piece, on a Dizzy Gillespie Dial 78rpm in 1946; then Cootie Williams’s big band version on the Hit label from 1944; and, of course, Monk’s recording of it, at first titled “Round About Midnight” for Blue Note in 1947.

I read an article in *PM*, a short-lived New York newspaper of the Forties, which painted Monk as mysterious and eccentric and was illustrated by a photo of him looking up at a picture of Billie Holiday that he had framed with red lights. When I met him one night at the Roost, the new hot jazz cellar on Broadway in the summer of ’48, we were standing at the bar at the rear of the club. I had just come from a broadcasting studio where Leonard Feather had done his weekly record show and the announcer who read the commercial had mangled it into unintentional humor. I was recounting the incident to a few friends and Monk immediately caught on to the crux of what made it so funny. He was just one of the cats, albeit a special one.

The interview I did with Monk in early 1957 (it appeared in *Metronome* in March of that year, but I think it was actually done for the Swedish magazine *Estrad* and was published there first, as well as in France’s *Jazz Magazine*), was a mixture of conversation (his manager Harry Colomby chimed in from time to time) and Q&A. Monk answered most everything but, more often than not, with short answers or statements in the realm of “What’s going to happen with this music? When am I going to take my band to Paris and Stockholm?” or in reference to “Where do you think the music is going?”—“I don’t know and I’m not worrying about it.”

The next longest conversation we had was in the back room of the Five Spot between sets. Somehow we became engaged in an extended discussion about eyeglass frames. It seemed that Monk would have gone on until he had to go on for the last set but Jules Colomby (Harry’s brother and Monk’s assistant manager), my ride uptown, was anxious to leave and I had to go.

Basically Monk was a man of few words. I think many felt he was hard to approach, not hostile but off in his own thoughts. One day in the early Fifties I visited him in his brownstone behind what would later become Lincoln Center to see if he was interested in hearing the beginnings of a lyric I was writing to “Round Midnight,” based on his Blue Note recording. At the time I didn’t know that a lyric had already been written to the standard version. He made me aware of this and then sat down to play on an upright piano in his living room with a concentration unaffected by a Top-40 deejay’s offerings blasting from a radio that sat atop the upright.

Recordings made for Riverside beginning in 1955 and long stays at the Five Spot helped Monk’s rise to a new visibility and an acclaim that was long overdue. The summer of ’57 was when John Coltrane moved from the Miles Davis Quintet to Monk’s Quartet. The chemistry between Trane and Monk was there and so were the audiences. I was one of them, sometimes three times a week. By the time Trane was into his third solo chorus Monk would be up and dancing in front of the bandstand.

At the Jazz Gallery, a second club opened in the same neighborhood by the Termini brothers, owners of the Five Spot, there was more room for Monk to dance. On one occasion he left the bandstand and moved down one of the long aisles of the main room. Then he traversed the gallery at the club’s back, stabbing the air with elbows akimbo as he stutter-stepped by, laying his cryptic aphorisms on us (“Two is one; black is white”) before making a left turn to enter the right aisle back to the stand while the band played on.

Monk was marvelously magical on and off the stand. He continues to have an effect on musicians of all generations through his compositions and recordings. When his friend and patron Baroness Nica de Koenigswarter asked me to deliver the eulogy at his funeral in 1982, she sent me a passage from Milan Kundera’s *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*. Where the name Beethoven appeared she had substituted Monk. It worked perfectly and I incorporated the excerpt in my text.

There are times when events occur that make one wonder. When I did the liner notes for Blue Note’s issue of *Thelonious Monk/Genius of Modern Music* on two 12-inch LPs (released in ’56) I wrote about walking on the famed 52nd Street—it must have been 1946—where a billboard outside one of the clubs, listing the musicians appearing that night, read: “Thonium Monk.” I added, “If he had a dollar for each time it has been spelled ‘Thelonius’ he could have endowed his own professorial chair at some university.”

The Kundera adjustment in my speech inspired Thelonious Monk, Jr. to approach the Beethoven Society of Washington, DC in an effort to enlist their aid in establishing a Monk memorial. What evolved was the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz, four years after his passing. Its main base is in Washington with offices in Los Angeles and New Orleans. My imagining of an endowed chair at a university wound up as an institution of learning that is inspiring young musicians and helping to not only keep Monk’s name and music alive, but jazz itself.

As Monk might have put it, “Always know.”

—IRA GITLER  
May 2009

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**ERIC DOLPHY**—At The Five Spot, Vol. 2 (PRS-31339)  
**JOHN COLTRANE**—Coltrane (PRS-31341)  
**MILES DAVIS**—Miles: The New Miles Davis Quintet (PRS-31343)  
**THE RED GARLAND QUINTET WITH JOHN COLTRANE**—Dig It! (PRCD-31592)  
**THELONIOUS MONK QUINTET**—Monk (PRS-31593)  
**SONNY ROLLINS WITH THELONIOUS MONK/KENNY DORHAM**—Moving Out (PRS-31594)

- 1 WE SEE** 5:18
- 2 GETS IN YOUR EYES** 4:33  
(Harbach-Kern) Polygram Int'l-ASCAP
- 3 LOCOMOTIVE** 6:24
- 4 HACKENSACK** 5:11
- 5 LET'S CALL THIS** 5:08
- 6 THINK OF ONE (TAKE 2)** 5:47
- 7 THINK OF ONE (TAKE 1)** 5:40

All selections composed by Thelonious Monk (Thelonious Music-BMI), except as indicated.

on #1-4:

**THELONIOUS MONK piano**  
**FRANK FOSTER tenor saxophone**  
**RAY COPELAND trumpet**  
**CURLY RUSSELL bass**  
**ART BLAKEY drums**

on #5-7:

**THELONIOUS MONK piano**  
**SONNY ROLLINS tenor saxophone**  
**JULIUS WATKINS French horn**  
**PERCY HEATH bass**  
**WILLIE JONES drums**

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RUDY VAN GELDER REMASTERS



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