

# The Giants of Jazz.

## Atlantic SD 2-905

### Record 1.

*Tin Tin Deo; Night in Tunisia; Woody'n You; Tour de Force;*

### Record 2.

*Allen's Alley; Blue'n'Boogie; Everything Happens To Me; Dizzy's Rap; Blue Monk; 'Round Midnight; (November 14, 1971 - London)*



Thelonious Monk - piano. Dizzy Gillespie - trumpet (piano on Tin Tin Deo). Sonny Stitt - alto and tenor. Kai Winding - trombone. Al McKibbon - bass. Art Blakey - drums.

## Review by Dan Morgenstern - Down Beat April 26, 1973

Four star rating

There's some fantastic music here - how could it be otherwise with such players? But considering what these true giants can do (and have done), this is not quite the album we've been waiting for.

Recorded during a strenuous European tour at a concert in London, this double album is dominated by Dizzy Gillespie, who plays some mind-bending things, particularly on the free-swinging band tracks ("Woody'n you", "Tour de Force", "Allen's Alley" and "Blue'n'Boogie"). Dizzy has been playing so well for so long that some have lost sight of the fact that, like all great artists, he continues to grow. He's one of the most consistent of the Giants, though not in peak form here.

The Giants, of course, are without a nominal leader - it's an all-star gathering of equals - but Dizzy, by dint of instrument (the trumpet is a commanding horn), personality and inclination, is the front man. His "Rap" gives a glimpse of him in that role.

Monk is in fine fettle on "Tour," and plays a gas of a solo to open up "Boogie," yet seems somewhat subdued and stretches out less on his supposed features, "Monk" and "Midnight." His comping, a matter of some dispute (remember the famous Miles session?), is almost too well recorded and always interesting. (Since some people don't always understand what one writes, let me hasten to say that I dig the way Monk comps.)

Stitt is featured on "Everything" in his Parker ballad manner, and good, and plays a lot of alto elsewhere, but my favorite Sonny here is the relaxed tenor on "Tour." If you know how Sonny loves to stretch out, you can tell by the relative shortness of his solos alone that he, like his colleagues, was pretty tired.

Winding, whose usually fine feature, "Lover Man," has been excluded from this program, holds his own in this august company. All his spots are good, and he burns on "Woody'n'you" - a tempo like that is no trombone picnic.

"Deo" is McKibbon's feature, but Diz's lovely muted work almost steals the show. Nowhere is it mentioned that Diz does the piano work on this track. "Tunisia" is almost all Blakey, with Diz the only other soloist. By himself, he sounds more effective than in the section, but that's because the balance favors the drums (and less annoyingly, the bass) far too much. Of course, Blakey is a monumental driving force. He swings compellingly, and is still the ideal drummer for Monk (dig them on "Woody'n'"). But he often simply bashes without much concern for the soloist's train of thought.

This being a summit gathering of beboppers, ensemble playing takes a backseat to soloing, of course. But there are some delightful ensemble touches, and some grand climaxes with all members in full cry.

The sequencing is peculiar. It starts off with the only track that doesn't have Monk or Stitt or Winding on it, follows this with the drum feature, gives us four band tracks in a row, and ends with three slow pieces, one showcasing Stitt, the other back-to-back Monk tunes. This order bears no resemblance to how it went down live, I'm sure, and serves no constructive musical purpose.

A carefully recorded (taping arbitrarily in the middle of a long tour is not to exercise care), intelligently sequenced and edited and well-engineered set by this group of monsters could not be anything but a monster record. But we'll not have to wait too long for that - the grapevine has it that such a session is in the can already.

By all means, pick up on this bebop banquet, but don't let anyone tell you it's the best these great men can do.

Dan Morgenstern

