

In 1971, a true SUPER group was formed of Art Blakey, Dizzy Gillespie, Thelonious Monk, Sonny Stitt, Kai Winding, and Al McKibbon. Each was already an established superstar, and all major group leaders themselves with the exception of McKibbon. They agreed to leave their own groups and set out on a 42 concert world tour starting in Australia and New Zealand.

This Collectables 2 CD set was originally issued on Atlantic, in 1972 and on LP. You now have the opportunity to hear this historic music on CD. This session was recorded in London during their world tour in 1972. It is largely a blowing session but does have several highlights including Kai Winding on Blue n' Boogie; Sonny Stitt blowing on the beautiful ballad Everything Happens to Me; and Art Blakey's solo on Night in Tunisia.

CD 1 is largely devoted to Dizzy Gillespie with his signature tracks: Tin Tin Deo, Night in Tunisia, Woody 'n You, and Tour De Force and Diz takes full advantage of every solo opportunity. I am a bit more partial to CD 2 as it gives Gillespie's band mates their own room to stretch out. The price for this 2 CD set is worth it alone for the 2 closing numbers where Monk gets to shine: Blue Monk and Round Midnight. Here the blowing session cools down for Monk to take his inimitable piano solos.

The recording quality is adequate, but nothing special. The main reason to purchase this set is to get the chance to hear an all-star contingent that could not be approached today or near anytime in the past except for the period when Norman Granz put together the Jazz at the Philharmonic Series. Plus, you get the bonus of the reasonable prices that Collectables charges for their issues. For a slice of jazz history, never to be matched, this set comes recommended.

- Jeff Krow