



JOHN BEASLEY
presents

MONK

estra

vol. 2



1. **BRAKE'S SAKE** feat. Dontae Winslow **7:07**
2. **PLAYED TWICE** **3:54**
3. **CREPUSCULE WITH NELLIE** **4:29**
guest appearance by Regina Carter
4. **EVIDENCE** **7:20**
guest appearances by
Kamasi Washington and Conrad Herwig
5. **UGLY BEAUTY/PANNONICA** **5:18**

6. **I MEAN YOU** **6:22**
7. **LIGHT BLUE** **5:24**
8. **DEAR RUBY** **6:10**
guest appearance by Dianne Reeves
9. **CRISS CROSS** **6:20**
guest appearance by Pedrito Martinez
10. **WORK** **5:53**

PRODUCERS:

JOHN BEASLEY, RAN PINK AND GAVIN LURSSSEN

Arranged and Conducted by John Beasley



mackavenue.com • johnbeasleymusic.com

© 2017 Mack Avenue Records II, LLC. 18530 Mack Avenue, #299, Grosse Pointe Farms, MI 48236. All rights reserved. FBI Anti-Piracy Warning: The unauthorized replication or distribution of this copyrighted work is illegal. Criminal copyright infringement is investigated by the FBI and is punishable under federal law. Printed in the USA.

Producers: **John Beasley, Ran Pink** and **Gavin Lurssen**
Executive Producer: **Gretchen Valade**
Production Coordinator: **Lorna Chiu**
EVP of A&R: **Al Pryor**
Production Manager, Mack Avenue: **Will Wakefield**
Copyist: **Liz Finch**

Recorded at:
United Recording, Studio B - Los Angeles, CA;
The Hive - Los Angeles, CA;
Kaleidoscope Studios - Jersey City, NJ;
Teaneck Sound Studios - Teaneck, NJ
Engineers: **Joshua Stuebe, David Kowalski**
Assistant Engineer: **Wesley Seidman**

Mixed at:
Fonogenic Studios - Los Angeles, CA
Mix Engineer: **Ran Pink**

Mastered at:
Lurssen Mastering - Los Angeles, CA
Mastering Engineers: **Reuben Cohen** and **Gavin Lurssen**

Art Direction + Design: **Raj Naik** • naikdesign.com
Cover Art Graphic: **Philip Paquet** • philippaquet.com
Photography: booklet cover photo and inside photo
by **Lawrence Sumulong** for Jazz at Lincoln Center;
John Beasley + MONK'estra booklet photo
by **Misty Linder**;
all other photos by **Greg Allen**
Creative Services + Production: **Jodi Tack**
Product Manager: **Shannon Moore**

Management:
Lorna Chiu, John Beasley Music
lorna@johnbeasleymusic.com

Booking:
Katherine McVicker
MusicWorksInternational.com (Europe)
Myles Weinstein
UnlimitedMyles.com (global)

John Beasley plays Yamaha keyboards and pianos

Thelonious Monk was one of a kind, and so is
John Beasley. He hears things in Monk's music
that no one imagined! And he can make an
orchestra sing like an uncaged bird.

– QUINCY JONES

My father would have approved
your arrangements for MONK'estra
because he wrote these compositions
for musicians to take it and improvise
on them. You've kept his compositional
integrity. You're carrying on this tradition.
Anybody that has a love for my father's
music and has put in time like you have
with his music has my admiration.

– T.S. MONK



The double-GRAMMY® nominations for **MONK'estra, Volume 1**, the audience feedback at concerts and Facebook, and the many critical reviews with quite a number anticipating **Volume 2**, reassured me that I wasn't stark raving mad to form a big band at a time when the music business is in crisis and musicians' livelihoods are under threat.

I am indebted to a village of people who boosted me as I surfed through the recording of **Volume 2**. Firstly, the MONK'estra core band in LA and my New York band whose loyalty and sacrifices keep me humble. Your talent pushes me to write and imagine more innovative arrangements. Secondly, to the international orchestras who have opened their hearts to playing Monk's music MONK'estra-style and invited me as a guest conductor.

On **Volume 2**, I am fortunate to have guest artists who added their signature voice/sound that help stir a deeper well of emotions: Dianne Reeves, Regina Carter, Kamasi Washington, Conrad Herwig, Pedrito Martinez. To Dontae for writing words to live by in "Brake's Sake." To T.S. Monk and Gale Monk for giving me your blessings and generous words of support. To the pillars holding up the four corners of every record: Denny Stilwell and his Mack Avenue team of doers. DL Media Team: Don, Matthew, Maureen knowing who to call. Behind the scenes and believers are many but shout out to: Gavin Lurssen, Ran Pink, Liz Finch, Rachel Stilwell, Tommy LiPuma, Joe Donofrio, Don Lucoff, Barbara Leong, and my incredible agents, Katherine McVicker and Myles Weinstein. To my DNA, the Beasleys who keep me sturdy; and my bedrock, Lorna Chiu, for handling the obvious and invisible A-Z work of making a record and building my career. - JOHN BEASLEY





BRAKE'S SAKE feat. Dontae Winslow / Thelonious Monk • Thelonious Monk Corp. (BMI)

solo: Dontae Winslow – trumpet and rap

PLAYED TWICE / Thelonious Monk • Thelonious Monk Corp. (BMI)

solos: Ben Shepherd – bass; Bob Sheppard – soprano saxophone

CREPUSCULE WITH NELLIE / Thelonious Monk • Thelonious Monk Corp. (BMI)

guest appearance by Regina Carter – violin

EVIDENCE / Thelonious Monk • Thelonious Monk Corp. (BMI)

guest appearances by Kamasi Washington – tenor saxophone; Conrad Herwig – trombone

solo: Ben Shepherd – bass

UGLY BEAUTY/PANNONICA / Thelonious Monk • Thelonious Monk Corp. (BMI)

solo: Francisco Torres – trombone



I MEAN YOU / Thelonious Monk; Coleman Hawkins • Embassy Music Corporation (BMI);

Music Sales Corporation (ASCAP) • solos: Danny Janklow – alto saxophone;

Brian Swartz – trumpet; Adam Schroeder – baritone saxophone • Arranged by Brian Swartz

LIGHT BLUE / Thelonious Monk • Thelonious Monk Corp. (BMI)

solos: Brian Swartz – trumpet; John Beasley – organ

DEAR RUBY / Thelonious Monk; Sally Swisher • Embassy Music Corporation (BMI)

guest appearance by Dianne Reeves – vocals

CRISS CROSS / Thelonious Monk • Thelonious Monk Corp. (BMI)

guest appearance by Pedrito Martinez – conga and bata

solos: Tom Luer – tenor saxophone; John Beasley – piano

WORK / Thelonious Monk • Thelonious Monk Corp. (BMI)

solo: Ryan Dragon – trombone

Redux: popular word these days. Some people think it just means “sequel,” and on that basis, it would apply to this second showcase for **John Beasley**’s wildly imaginative, precision-crafted arrangements of compositions by Thelonious Monk. But in the arts, *redux* has a more specific meaning, used to designate an existing work presented in a new way – and that’s the definition that best describes this album (as well as its GRAMMY®-nominated predecessor).

Check out “Evidence,” one of Monk’s most familiar compositions. Despite the mischievous phrasing of the melody, it’s at heart a straight-ahead reworking of the old standard “Just You, Just Me.” But in Beasley’s hands, it becomes a three-part suite marked by elastic time: the tempo stretches and contracts. The first section presents the melody; after the deep bass musings from Benjamin Shepherd, the second section belongs to tenor saxist Kamasi Washington, who whirls a dervish solo in free verse. The last part also speeds and slows, but not before breaking the melody in half: it starts in waltz time, then switches to four-four to introduce Conrad Herwig’s playful trombone solo. (The evidence here follows a circuitous chain of command, indeed.)

Listen to “Crepuscule With Nellie,” Monk’s love letter to his wife. *Crépsecule* is French for “twilight” – Monk got the word from his admirer and protector, the Baroness Pannonica de Koenigswater – and it well suits the song’s misty-sunset character. Beasley burnishes the bluesy melody by placing it in the hands of Bob Sheppard on clarinet and violinist Regina Carter, whose luminous timbres offer a lovely caress. But Monk’s tune contains some slight disruption – the little hop-skips that twice interrupt the main strain of the melody – which Beasley emphasizes with brass stingers. Those sounded puckish on Monk’s piano; here they leap in with alacrity, surprise-party revelers hiding in the dusk, to transform a reverie into a livelier dream.

And while the once forgotten “Ugly Beauty” has found some adherents in recent years, no version comes close to this one in resolving the dichotomy implicit in the title. Right from the start, Beasley paints a picture of duality by juxtaposing the piping reeds against a swampy thicket of low brass and bass clarinets. (If you know an arranger who uses the bass clarinet as often or as well as Beasley, speak up.) And in case that didn’t convince you, Beasley has another trick up his sleeve. Two minutes into this exotic wonderworld, he segues effortlessly into a sprightly version of “Pannonica,” that most beautiful of sonic portraits. And then, for good measure, he pours in a brief reference to another Monk classic, straight from the trumpet section. Dualities abound. Even for a master colorist like Beasley, this arrangement stands out for its riot of pastels, oils, and tempera.

Do these sound as if Monk himself had simply transferred his piano style to a larger group of instruments? Absolutely not – and why should they? The truest fidelity to Monk’s music, and the spirit that animated it, comes from a willingness to engage these compositions with an ingenuity as audacious as the one that created them. Monk’s songs inhabited a fantastic world of their own, spawning unique forms and colors, stories and pictures, and rewriting the rule book as they took shape. They deserve nothing less than a similar explosion of invention and novelty when re-conceived for the orchestral idiom.

So we needn’t concern ourselves with that fact that Monk would never have considered using a light funk bossa-nova behind “Ugly Beauty” or “Pannonica.” The point is that Beasley, tapping his own deep wellspring of creativity, heard this as a possibility, and then tuned it to perfection. Would Monk have thought to apply poetry as a suitable counterpoint on his lesser-known gem, the rarely recorded “Brake’s Sake?” And even if he had, would he have approved of Dontae Winslow’s whip-smart, on-target rap – a latter-day answer to the beat poets of Monk’s time?

No one can say, of course. And in the end, it doesn't matter. One mark of a timeless artist is the ability of his work to endure, even when modulated by evolving sensibilities and novel approaches. The evidence of that durability lies in the compositions of Thelonious Monk; proof of their malleability lies in these superb and refreshing arrangements by John Beasley.

NEIL TESSER



All songs Arranged and Conducted by John Beasley
except "I Mean You" arranged by Brian Swartz

trumpets: Bijon Watson, Jamie Hovorka, James Ford, Brian Swartz (all songs except "Evidence" and "Dear Ruby"), Brandyn Philips (on "Evidence" and "Dear Ruby")

trombones: Francisco Torres (all songs except "Light Blue" and "Brake's Sake"), Wendell Kelly, Ryan Dragon, Steve Hughes, Ido Meshulam (on "Light Blue" and "Brake's Sake")

woodwinds: Bob Sheppard, Danny Janklow, Tom Luer (all songs except "Evidence" and "Dear Ruby"), Thomas Peterson, Adam Schroeder, Alex Budman (on "Evidence" and "Dear Ruby")

piano, synthesizer: John Beasley

acoustic and electric bass: Ben Shepherd

drums: Terreon Gully, Gene Coye (on "Light Blue")

Conrad Herwig appears courtesy of Criss Cross Jazz

Pedrito Martínez appears courtesy of Motéma Music

Dianne Reeves appears courtesy of Concord Jazz

Dontae Winslow appears courtesy of Winslowdynasty/Ransom Entertainment

©© 2017 Mack Avenue Records II, LLC. Printed in the USA. 6-73203-11252-0 MAC1125