

NEW RELEASE

Artist: Jazz Ensemble Of Memphis
Title: Playing In The Yard
Label: Memphis International Records
Genre: Jazz/Traditional
Selection: MIR 2042
Release Date: April 5, 2024
CD
UPC: 823862204221
Price: \$9.99
12" Cobalt Blue Vinyl
UPC: 823862204214
Price: \$25.98

TRACK LIST:

1. Playing In The Yard
2. The Dark End of The Street
3. Things Ain't What They Used To Be
4. The Crawl
5. When You Wish Upon A Star
6. A Night In Tunisia
7. The Dark End of The Street (Reprise)



JAZZ ENSEMBLE OF MEMPHIS

PLAYING IN THE YARD



CD



12" Cobalt Blue Vinyl

These kids are incredible! I'm so grateful to be a tiny part of their world. And it is indeed their world now.

Kirk Whalum — Memphis Musician

The Jazz Ensemble of Memphis' Playing in the Yard has made me one happy Jazz-camper this day! Having just finished reading the biography of one Thelonious Monk, who made it a habit of "playing in the yard" with his historically adventurous, ingenious, yet playful music, I'm smiling from ear to ear as I listen! I'm feeling extra blessed to note the high level of creativity in the writing/arrangement, and of course the improvisation. Yes!! This is such a welcome discovery because mediocrity creeps in unannounced far too often in these endeavors. "Hey we're only teenagers..." We forget that Monk & his cronies (Dizzy, Parker, et al) were also in their teens and early twenties when they innovated an exalted art form that remains at the center and top of all popular music. Globally. And these kids are bringing that excellence to fore with that unmistakable Memphis seasoning which sets them apart, and in the rarified air of other Memphis giants. George Coleman, Phineas Newborn, Herman Green and so many more — left here with hopes that exactly this would happen! Bravo!!!

Kirk Whalum — Memphis Musician

Playing in The Yard:

This record began as a conversation between Memphis International Records owner, Jeff Phillips, his father Johnny and producer David Less about the 1959 album, *Downhome Reunion: Young Men From Memphis*. Recorded in New York, it featured Memphis Jazz legends George Coleman, Booker Little, Phineas Newborn, Jr. Calvin Newborn, Frank Strozier, Jamal Nasser and others before they were famous.

The Phillips' asked Less to produce a new version, recorded in Memphis, of some of the top young jazz musicians that, like on the original record, were at the beginning of their careers but showed promise of future greatness. The Jazz Ensemble of Memphis was not a working group and some met for the first time at these sessions. Their ages range from 17-26. *Playing The Yard* is that album.

This album is dedicated to all of those great Memphis Jazz musicians that came before us. We stand on your shoulders.

The Players:

Drums: Kurtis Gray was 17 years old at the time of recording this album.

Trumpet: Martin Carodine, Jr. was 19 at the time of this recording.

Bass/Electric Bass: Liam O'Dell was 21 years old at the time of recording.

Keyboards/Percussionist/Vibes/Congas: DeAnte Payne was 25 years old at the time of this recording.

Tenor Saxophone/Flute: Charles Pender II was 26 years old at the time of this recording



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