

Thelonious Monk's "Round Midnight"
Selected Bibliography/Discography

Michael McClimon

M539 – Introduction to Music Bibliography

Prof. Phil Ponella

28 April, 2010

Bibliography

Aikin, Jim. "Two Views of "Round Midnight": A Classic Tune Then and Now." *Keyboard* 11 (April 1985): 36-42.

This article contains one page of text and two transcriptions of "Round Midnight," one by Monk (from *Thelonious Himself*, April 1957) and another recorded by Richie Beirach. The article is intended primarily for keyboardists interested in Monk's music, but contains some other useful information too. Aikin pays a lot of attention to the mood of the tune, and is careful to point out that Monk's unusual piano technique is not "careless or sloppy," as some have criticized. Most of the insight into the music is available elsewhere, but the article remains valuable for Tom Darter's transcription of Monk's solo.

Bowen, José A. "The History of Remembered Innovation: Tradition and Its Role in the Relationship between Musical Works and Their Performances." *The Journal of Musicology* 11, no. 2 (Spring 1993): 139-73.

Bowen uses Monk's "Round Midnight" as a case study in describing the fluid nature of a musical work. The work, he asserts, is not the score, but the many and varied performances of the work itself. He uses the history of Monk's tune, first as recorded by Cootie Williams, and with later interpretations by Dizzy Gillespie and Miles Davis, to illustrate that there is no strict requirement to constitute a musical work, but rather a set of family resemblances (following Wittgenstein). Bowen states that a full history of "Round Midnight" is forthcoming, but it has yet to appear in print. Oddly, he includes a complete discography (featuring many performers) of printed recordings of "Round Midnight."

Brown, John Robert. Review of *Round Midnight* by Thelonious Monk. *Jazz Journal International: The World's Greatest Jazz Magazine* 41 (December 1988): 42.

In this brief review, Brown examines a collection of Monk's works released in 1988 (*Giants of Jazz* LPJT 19). He praises Monk as being "delightfully self-assured and willful" and notes that a rehearing of these early works is crucial to understanding post-war jazz. Brown raises some reasonable doubts on whether or not this collection is in any way better than previous Monk compilations. Brown's review is a good exemplar of the typical view of Monk's music just several years after his death.

Cardenas, Steve, transcriber. *Thelonious Monk Fake Book*. Edited by Don Sickler. Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2002.

This score contains lead sheets (melody and chord symbols) for all of Monk's compositions. Voicings and introductions are included for some compositions, including "Round Midnight." Each lead sheet lists a source recording for reference, and many compositions have a critical commentary in the back of the book. There is also a complete discography of

Monk's recordings. This score is considered by many to be the scholarly edition for Monk's music, if a scholarly edition for jazz can exist.

Feurzig, David Kahn. "Making the Right Mistakes: James P. Johnson, Thelonious Monk, and the Trickster Aesthetic." D.M.A. diss., Cornell University, 1997.

Feurzig's dissertation aims to draw connections between the playing of James P. Johnson and Monk, especially when it comes to their seemingly "wrong notes." He examines Monk's playing through the lens of Johnson's stride technique and defends their unusual pitch choices as manifestations of a "trickster aesthetic," one that values disorientation. Transcriptions are included of Johnson's "Keep of the Grass," and of Monk's 1968 recording of "Round Midnight." Appendix 2 contains a particularly useful chronological listing of critical appraisals of Monk's piano technique, and the bibliography is useful for locating reviews of Monk's playing.

Givan, Benjamin. "Thelonious Monk's Pianism." *The Journal of Musicology* 26, no. 3 (Summer 2009): 404-42.

This recent article defends Monk's piano playing, often criticized as being incompetent. Givan cites Feurzig's work (above), and goes on to explain his playing as making logical musical sense. Givan uses transcriptions of Monk's playing on film (including recordings of "Round Midnight") to demonstrate his peculiar fingerings and hand crossing while playing. In the end, Givan urges that perhaps Monk is not as unusual as the caricature he is often portrayed as. The footnotes to this article are extensive, and provide a good source for locating video of Monk's playing as well as the critical reception of Monk's piano ability.

Gourse, Leslie. *Straight No Chaser: The Life and Genius of Thelonious Monk*. New York: Schirmer, 1997.

Gourse's biography of Monk is more of a traditional biography than Kelley's (below), focusing mostly on Monk's life with not so much focus on the music itself. She notes in the preface that the analyses of music she provides "await augmentation by a[nother] musicologist or musician." She provides notes at the end of each chapter; a system that works better than listing all notes in a segment at the end of the book. Gourse also provides several appendices: a list of all compositions registered with BMI, a sessionography, a videography, and a bibliography (that seems slim for the scope of this book). Her biography is less dense than Kelley's and easier to read, and provides a good insight into Monk the man as opposed to Monk the musician. Reviewed by David Baise in *Annual Review of Jazz Studies* 10 (1999): 315-20.

Kelley, Robin D.G. "New Monastery: Monk and the Jazz Avant-Garde." *Black Music Research Journal* 19, no. 2 (Autumn 1999): 135-68.

In this article, Kelley examines the relationship between Monk and the free jazz (avant-garde) movement that arose in the early 1960s. He discusses the forward-looking nature of Monk's early compositions (like "Round Midnight") and why his music came to prominence at the same time as the avant-garde movement. Kelley's reference list is broad, and he draws from many different aspects of research on Monk's music.

———. *Thelonious Monk: The Life and Times of an American Original*. New York: Free Press, 2009.

Kelley's long-anticipated biography of Monk is an in-depth look at Monk's life, his music, and the people surrounding it. The book provides valuable insight into the cultural setting of his work and the circumstances that produced it. Kelly gives a useful history of the creation of "Round Midnight," especially with regards to the co-composer credit taken by Bernie Hanighen and Cootie Williams. He also talks at length about the Miles Davis recording of "Round Midnight" and discussions between Monk and Davis. The notes are extensive, and the selected discography and videography are particularly good.

Koch, Lawrence O. "Thelonious Monk: Compositional Techniques." *Annual Review of Jazz Studies* 2 (1983): 67-80.

Koch's ambitious article attempts to point out some compositional features common to much of Monk's music. It contains many excerpts from Monk's compositions (45 examples on just 13 pages), and consequently does not contain much explanation. Some of the concepts discussed are the flatted fifth, the approach to the blues, diminution, bridge development, and common melodic figures and voicings. The article would be good for someone new to Monk's music, but is too elementary for the reader who is already familiar with it.

Larson, Steve. *Analyzing Jazz: A Schenkerian Approach*. Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2009.

Larson uses "Round Midnight" as a centerpiece for discussing the application of Schenkerian analysis to jazz. He analyzes two performances by Monk himself, one by Oscar Peterson, and two by Bill Evans; complete transcriptions for all five are included in the appendix. The book is a reworking of his dissertation ("Schenkerian Analysis of Modern Jazz," (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Michigan, 1987)), and chapter 2 is a reprint of his article "Schenkerian Analysis of Modern Jazz: Questions about Method" (*Music Theory Spectrum* 20, no. 2 (Autumn 1998): 209-41).

———. "Composition versus Improvisation?" *Journal of Music Theory* 49, no. 2 (Fall 2005): 241-75.

In this article, Larson claims that the traditional distinction between composition and improvisation is unnecessary and perhaps even backwards. To support his point, he uses Bill Evans' recording of "Round Midnight" from *Conversations with Myself* to draw connections between the composed parts of the recordings to those that were most likely improvised. Portions of transcription are provided for the Evans recording, but also for two recordings by Monk and one by Bud Powell. Also included is an analysis of Evans' "Stella by Starlight", from the same album. Larson draws some interesting connections between the structure of "Round Midnight" and the types of improvisation it engenders, though this point is mentioned in an aside and unfortunately not developed any further.

Monk Institute. "Thelonious Monk – Selected Works." Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz. <http://www.monkinstitute.org/monk.php?Page=TS-SW> (accessed March 2, 2010).

Provides a relatively complete listing of Monk's own compositions along with a discography so that each composition can be easily located. Not a comprehensive listing and does not contain listings of pieces Monk performed that he did not compose, nor other performers' recordings of his compositions.

Shapiro, Ian. "In Search of the Original 'Round Midnight': A Study of Published Manuscripts, Transcriptions, and Recordings of Thelonious Monk's Composition." *Jazz Research Papers* 8 (1988): 80-96.

In this article, Shapiro attempts to identify the "Urtext" for Monk's "Round Midnight." Although no autograph copy exists, Shapiro examines several published versions, several illegally printed versions (from various fake books), and several transcriptions. The tone of the article is not scholarly, the origin of the examples is not clear, and the printed examples are difficult to read. Shapiro does provide a useful discography that includes recordings of the piece by performers other than Monk, as well as recordings under its alternate name, "Round About Midnight."

Sheridan, Chris. *Brilliant Corners: A Bio-Discography of Thelonious Monk*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001.

Sheridan's bio-discography is the most complete Monk discography to date. The chronological discography is scattered through a rough biography of Monk's life that provides a narrative for each session. The book is arranged by recording date (though live performances, when recorded, are also included) and Sheridan is very thorough in listing the albums on which a particular recording can be found. The first appendix gives a complete listing of records by catalog number, the second provides a videography, the third a copy of Monk's diary from 1944-1976, and the final appendix a bibliography. The text would be

easier to use if the "bio-" part of the book was separate from the discography; all of the extra text in between session listings (not to mention the bizarre fonts, and text boxes on nearly every page) make the process of actually finding sessions difficult.

Solis, Gabriel. "Hearing Monk: History, Memory, and the Making of a 'Jazz Giant.'" *The Musical Quarterly* 86, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 82-116.

Solis's history of ethnographic study of Monk led him to categorize the influences Monk had on later generations; this article attempts to explain them. Using interviews of people that are self-acknowledged interpreters of Monk's music, he identifies that the most historically important aspects of Monk's playing were his developmental logic, sense of humor, and intimate understanding of time. Solis draws a great deal on his ethnographic research and does not engage Monk's music directly (to any extent), but the article is valuable for gaining insight into how Monk conceived of his own compositions, as well as his playing.

Tucker, Mark. "Mainstreaming Monk: The Ellington Album." In *Uptown Conversation: The New Jazz Studies*, edited by Robert G. O'Meally, Brent Edwards, and Farah Griffin, 150-65. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.

In this article, Tucker examines in depth the connection between the music of Monk and that of Duke Ellington—a connection often made without much basis in fact. He discusses the "mainstreaming" of Monk's music via a 1958 recording of Monk playing Ellington's music. A connection is drawn between the popularity of some of Monk's compositions like "Round Midnight" and "Well You Needn't" and some of Ellington's most popular tunes. The focus is mostly on the historical implications of the album, but there is some valuable information about the way Monk approached his recording dates.

Williams, Martin. "What Kind of Composer Was Thelonious Monk?" *The Musical Quarterly* 76, no. 3 (Fall 1992): 433-41.

Williams' short article discusses Monk's compositional style, as compared to typical bebop composers. Rather than tunes that serve merely as introductions to improvised solos, Monk's tunes are fully composed, and he encouraged his sidemen to use the melody as a point of departure rather than just using the chord changes. Williams compares Monk to Jelly Roll Morton and Duke Ellington, who both created their own language using music of their day, just as Monk did. Though "Round Midnight" is not mentioned, the article provides a glimpse into Monk's thought process when it came to his compositions.

Young, James and Carl Matheson. "The Metaphysics of Jazz." *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 58, no. 2 (Spring 2000): 125-33.

Young and Matheson use two recordings of "Round Midnight," one by Monk and one by Miles Davis, as a starting point for considering what constitutes a single work in jazz. They address whether or not there can be multiple instances of the same work in a largely improvised medium. This article makes much the same point—albeit less convincingly—as Bowen's (above), but Bowen is not cited. Some interesting observations are made about canonical forms and the role of the *Real Book* in the instantiation of jazz works.

Selected Discography
(arranged chronologically by recording date)

Note: Many of the versions listed here are out of print, so I was not able to listen to them. They are included here for matters of historical interest. I am indebted to Robin D.G. Kelley's biography (listed above) for the information I was able to find.

Williams, Cootie. *Cootie Williams and His Orchestra, 1941-1944*. Classics 827, 1995. CD.

This compilation is the only CD recording that exists of the first recorded performance of "Round Midnight" (though listed as "Round About Midnight"). Recorded on August 22, 1944 with a young Bud Powell at the piano, the side was originally released on the Hit label (Hit 7119). Williams demanded co-composer credit for the Monk's piece, as he made some slight changes for this recording date. The record label is now defunct and the disc is nearly impossible to purchase.

Gillespie, Dizzy. *Small Groups, 1945-1950: A Night in Tunisia*. Giants of Jazz 53122, 1998. CD.

This compilation contains the historically significant second recording of "Round Midnight" (again, as "Round About Midnight"). Recorded on February 7, 1946, it was originally released on Dial 1001 as the B side of a 78 rpm record. Along with Gillespie, the players are Lucky Thompson (tenor sax), Milt Jackson (vibes), Al Haig (piano), Ray Brown (bass), and Stan Levey (drums). This recording contains Gillespie's introduction and coda which have become as much a part of the tune as Monk's original. This CD is now out of print and difficult to come by.

Monk, Thelonious. *Genius of Modern Music, Vol. 1*. Blue Note BLP 5002, 1952. Remastered by Rudy Van Gelder, Blue Note 7243-5-32138-2-4, 2001. CD.

Recorded on November 21, 1947, this is Monk's first recording of "Round Midnight." Also featuring George Taitt (trumpet), Sahib Shihab (alto sax), Bob Paige (bass), and Art Blakey (drums). The original LP release had the track listed as "Round About Midnight"; this recording was re-released as Blue Note 81510. This RVG edition has new liner notes written by Bob Blumenthal. The arrangement uses Dizzy Gillespie's popular introduction and coda.

Various Artists. *The Advance Guard of the '40s*. EmArcy 36016, 1955. 33 rpm.

This recording made by Jackie Paris on November 12, 1949, marks the first recording of the vocal version of "Round Midnight," with lyrics by Bernie Hanighen. Also on the recording is Eddie Shu (tenor sax), Dick Hyman (piano), John Collins (guitar), Tommy Potter (bass), and Roy Haynes (drums). The recording was never released on CD, and has been out of print for more than fifty years.

Davis, Miles. *'Round About Midnight*. Columbia CL 949, 1956. Reissued, Columbia CK 85201 [2001]. CD.

Davis' recording of Monk's tune is arguably more canonic than Monk's own, after his debut with "'Round Midnight" at the 1956 Newport Jazz Festival. This recording was made on September 10, 1956, and also includes a young John Coltrane (tenor sax), Red Garland (piano), Paul Chambers (bass), and Philly Joe Jones (drums). The original liner notes by George Avakian are included, along with new liner notes by Bob Blumenthal. Davis is at the top of his game with his classic Harmon mute sound on this recording, and Monk's composition provides a vehicle on which he and Coltrane work their improvisational magic.

Monk, Thelonious. *Thelonious Himself*. Riverside RLP 12-235, 1957. Reissued, Riverside OJC 2531-254-2 [1992]. CD.

This solo recording was made on April 12, 1957, and offers a chance to hear Monk play the piece without any outside influences. He essentially plays the introduction (Dizzy's, now standard in Monk's own playing), the head twice, and the coda, with little improvisation. Transcriptions of this recording are available in Aikin (partial) and Larson 2009 (complete), both listed above.