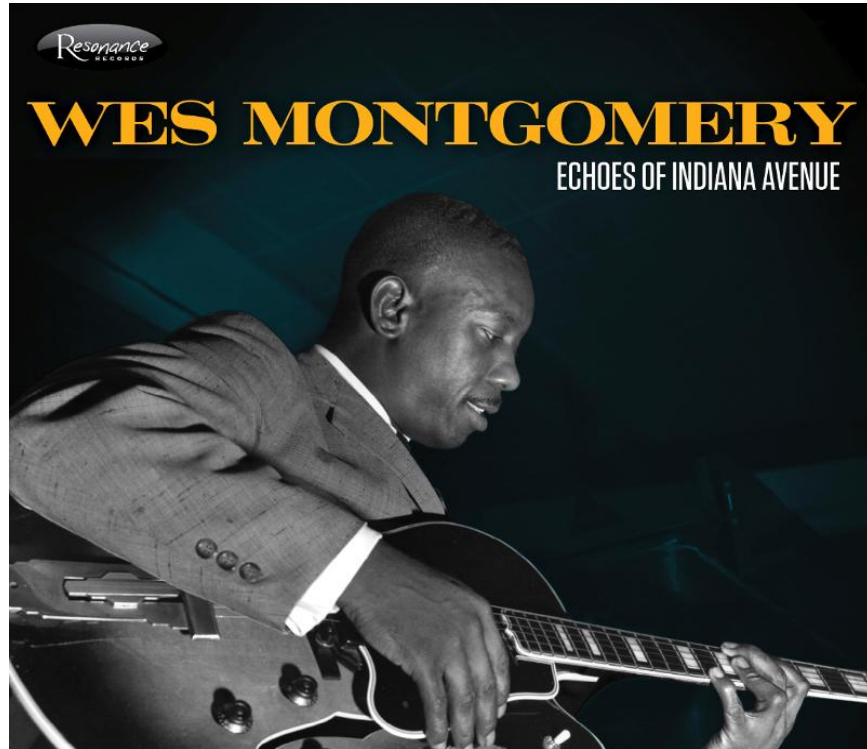


**RESONANCE RECORDS TO RELEASE LONG LOST
WES MONTGOMERY TAPES, *ECHOES OF INDIANA AVENUE*,
ON MARCH 6, 2012**

**FIRST FULL ALBUM OF PREVIOUSLY
UNHEARD MONTGOMERY MUSIC IN OVER 25 YEARS**



RELEASE COINCIDES WITH MONTGOMERY'S 88TH BIRTHDAY

With a lot of sleuthing and a team of experts on the case, long lost tapes of **Wes Montgomery** have been discovered and restored. Resonance Records will release *Echoes of Indiana Avenue* - the first full album of previously unheard Montgomery music in over 25 years - on March 6, 2012, which would have been Montgomery's 88th birthday. Over a year and a half in the making, the release will provide a rare, revealing glimpse of a bona fide guitar legend. The tapes are the earliest known recordings of Montgomery as a leader, pre-dating his auspicious 1959 debut on Riverside Records. The album showcases Montgomery in performance from 1957-1958 at nightclubs in his hometown of Indianapolis, Indiana, as well as rare studio recordings. The release is also beautifully packaged, containing previously unseen photographs and insightful essays by noted music writers and musicians alike, including guitarist Pat Martino and Montgomery's brothers Buddy and Monk.

On this scintillating discovery, Montgomery plays it strictly straight ahead, swinging with a momentum and ferocity that is positively visceral - a clear display of Montgomery's bebop side. Listening to these recordings only reaffirms how Montgomery exerted such a profound influence over generations of guitarists - from George Benson, Pat Martino and Joe Pass to John Scofield, Pat Metheny, Kevin Eubanks, and Russell Malone to Kurt Rosenwinkel.

Joined by such Naptown colleagues as drummer Paul Parker and keyboardist Melvin Rhyne (who would later appear on Montgomery's first Riverside release), pianist Earl Van Riper, bassist Mingo Jones and

drummer Sonny Johnson, as well as brothers Monk on acoustic bass and Buddy on piano (the brothers featured on one track), Montgomery swings with blistering abandon on a program of burners and ballads. Included here are renditions of Shorty Rogers' "Diablo's Dance," Erroll Garner's "Misty" and Billy Strayhorn's "Take The A Train" as well as jazz standards "Darn That Dream" and "Body and Soul." Montgomery also reveals some bluesy roots with an earthy improvised "After Hours Blues," which has him playing with Guitar Slim-like nastiness. Elsewhere on ***Echoes of Indiana Avenue*** there's a stirring duet between Wes and organist Rhyne on a moody rendition of Thelonious Monk's "Round Midnight" and a faithful rendition of Horace Silver's Latin-tinged "Nica's Dream." Montgomery and his brothers also tackle Thelonious Monk's "Straight, No Chaser" with bop-ish authority.

How these long lost tapes from the early stage of Montgomery's solo career finally emerged after being on the shelf for more than 50 years is a tale of intrigue that will enthrall collectors and aficionados. Although the identity of the person who made the original recordings remains unknown, the tapes may have passed through several hands before they were eventually acquired in 1990 by a guitarist and Montgomery fan Jim Greeninger. Due to their fragile condition, he immediately made digital transfers of the original tapes and set out to make a deal with a record company. It wasn't until 2008 that Greeninger, who had tried selling the tapes on eBay, contacted **Michael Cuscuna**, the respected veteran producer who has had a long track record with Blue Note Records and is also the co-founder of Mosaic Records. In the summer of 2010, Cuscuna contacted **Zev Feldman** of Resonance Records, who served as a producer on the project. "We had no idea when we got the tapes what they were exactly," Feldman recalls. "All we knew was that Wes was on them. So between 2010 and 2011, I made three trips to Indianapolis where I interviewed and discussed the recordings with scholars, musicians and friends of Wes. It was a big mystery and we had to act like gumshoes in piecing it all together. It was actually in part because of label founder and president **George Klabin's** support that we were able to make this project possible."

The result, in addition to the fully restored music, is a 24-page deluxe digipak showcasing rare family photographs that are being seen for the very first time, including a humorous shot of Montgomery (in costume) and friends taken on Halloween. There are also some of the most classic earlier photos of Montgomery taken by iconic jazz photographer, Duncan Scheidt. Veteran jazz journalists Dan Morgenstern and Bill Milkowski contribute essays, as do jazz guitar great Pat Martino and Indiana-based jazz educator Dr. David N. Baker, whom Feldman cites as a key catalyst on the project.

In addition to its release via physical CD and digital formats, Resonance has created a hand-numbered, hand-assembled LP edition pressed by audiophile embraced Record Technology, Inc. (RTI) and with a deluxe gatefold LP jacket by Stoughton Press. The two 12" LP's were mastered by the legendary Bernie Grundman at 45 RPM for the best sound. Resonance is also offering a free digital booklet with purchase where available (which will contain all of the content in the physical editions).

"I'm thrilled that this music will finally see the light of day," wrote Cuscuna in the liner notes. "And even more delighted that it is all being done in the best possible way."

Echoes of Indiana Avenue consists of three different sessions -- one studio and two live. Four of the tracks were recorded at The Hub Bub, a long-forgotten jazz club in Indianapolis. The title of the collection refers to a longstanding popular commercial strip in Indianapolis, with historical roots. As Dr. Baker remarks, "In Indianapolis during the 1940s and 1950s twenty or more clubs and other performance venues were operating at any given time. Generally speaking, the important clubs lay on or near main thoroughfares in predominantly black areas. The busiest and most notable area was known as 'The Avenue,' which was the portion of Indiana Avenue."

Feldman continues, "We felt it was very important to pay homage to Indiana Avenue, which many historians consider to be the nerve center of the African American community in Indy during the 50's when these recordings were made. Wes was a part of this community."

A late bloomer, Montgomery didn't pick up the six-string guitar until age 19. Born on March 6, 1925 in Indianapolis, he began playing a four-string tenor guitar at age 13 before purchasing his first six-string (a

Gibson ES-150). Learning to play by copying recordings of his guitar idol, Charlie Christian, Montgomery eventually developed a huge vocabulary on the instrument, though he was strictly self-taught and couldn't read music.

He began playing locally at the Club 440 in Indianapolis before touring the Midwest and South with his own group. After returning home from a tour with Lionel Hampton, Montgomery decided to make music a secondary part of his life in order to support his large family. While settling down to a grueling factory job by day, he continued playing guitar by night.

In 1955, he began playing with his brothers alongside drummer Johnson and tenor saxophonist Pookie Johnson. In April of 1958, Montgomery recorded in Los Angeles with his brothers' new group, The Mastersounds. He later returned to Indianapolis, where he began working around town as a trio, featuring Rhyne and Parker. It was at the Missile Club in September of 1959 that alto saxophonist Cannonball Adderley first saw Montgomery in action. After his gig, Adderley, who had a keen eye for talent, stopped in and was instantly impressed by what he heard. He quickly called producer Orrin Keepnews, who in turn signed Montgomery to Riverside Records and arranged for a session. Montgomery's debut for the label, *The Wes Montgomery Trio: A Dynamic New Sound*, was released shortly thereafter.

Montgomery went on to release a dozen Riverside recordings between 1959 and 1964, which represent the peak of his straight ahead jazz playing. Producer Creed Taylor, who oversaw Montgomery's recordings at Verve (1964-1966) and A&M (1967-1968), sought to steer the guitarist's career in a more commercial direction. And he was largely successful. Albums such as *Bumpin'*, *California Dreaming*, *Goin' Out of My Head* and *Road Song* would sell in unprecedented numbers.

On *Echoes of Indiana Avenue*, Montgomery plays it strictly straight ahead, swinging with a momentum and ferocity that is positively visceral, years before he had eyes for expanding his market.

Montgomery's remarkably fluid, horn-inspired single note runs, as well as other techniques, made him a leading pioneer on his respective instrument. He brought an unconventional approach to the instrument in which he eschewed the plectrum in favor of using his right hand thumb for single note playing (both downstrokes and upstrokes) as well as for strumming. This unorthodox flesh-on-strings method allowed him to get a warmer, rounder sound on the instrument that was instantly recognizable.

Reflecting on *Echoes of Indiana Avenue*, guitar legend Pat Martino states, "We now have the release of an amazing collection of moments. Nine precious tracks where Wes unfolds again, and again. It's surprising they weren't shared at the time of their recording, but I guess it wasn't meant to be, and in a sense that makes them even more valuable."

For guitar aficionados, the *Echoes of Indiana Avenue* collection is the six-string equivalent of the Holy Grail.

Wes Montgomery - *Echoes of Indiana Avenue*
Resonance Records HCD - 2011 - Release Date: March 6, 2012

For further information on this and other **Resonance Records** releases, visit: ResonanceRecords.org

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