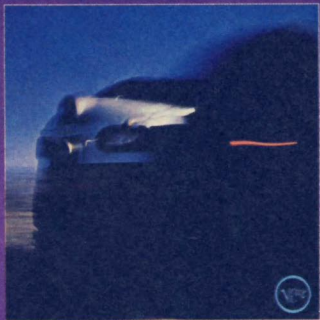


NIGHT TRAIN: THE OSCAR PETERSON TRIO



VHS

OSCAR PETERSON

VERVE RECORDS

MIXER: VV

RE: RV - 5H

M - Master

FS - False Start

PB - Playback

FF - False

FOR MASTERING



SUBTITLE

OPR

Peterson  
NIGHT TRAIN  
Oscair Peterson

LU

## NIGHT TRAIN: THE OSCAR PETERSON TRIO

OSCAR PETERSON, piano

RAY BROWN, bass

ED THIGPEN, drums

side one

1. NIGHT TRAIN 1967 4:50
2. C. JAM BLUES 1967 3:23
3. GEORGIA ON MY MIND 1967 3:42
4. BAGS' GROOVE 1967 5:12
5. MOTEN SWING 1967 2:52
6. EASY DOES IT 1967 2:45

side two

1. HONEY DRIPPER 1967 2:23
2. THINGS AIN'T WHAT THEY USED TO BE 1967 4:35
3. I GOT IT BAD AND THAT AINT GOOD 1967 5:05
4. BAND CALL 1967 3:51
5. HYMN TO FREEDOM 1967 5:30

Cover Photograph by Pete Turner  
Recorded in Los Angeles, Calif.,  
on Dec. 15 & 18, 1962  
Division of Engineering, Valparaiso  
Printed under the personal  
supervision of NORMAN GRANZ



"The past is hidden somewhere outside the realm, beyond the reach of the intellect," wrote Frost, "in some material object which we do not suspect." One of the most potent of all these material objects is a sheet of printed music and the sounds it conveys, as Frost and countless other writers have acknowledged. That is why it is a brave man indeed who would make an album composed of material which he knows belongs in the past consciousness of those likely to listen to it. The musician who does this will be grappling with all kinds of extra-musical intangibles, because when it comes to the past, we are all conservatives at heart.

Oscar Peterson's programme in this album delicately challenges the run-of-gold cliché

reminiscence and, it seems to me, challenges it triumphantly. Each of the themes he plays has its roots in the jazz past, and, more significant still, has upon it the indelible stamp of previous definitive versions. No matter, Peterson overcomes this terrifying handicap because the force of his own personality is so strong, sometimes stronger, than the originals. Even when he takes a piece like *Night Train*, tailored for the concert ensemble of a big band, he conveys the impression that the trio is the best conceivable setting for the tune. Indeed, there are more overtones of orchestral richness in his *Night Train* than in most of the big band versions I can remember.

If the dominant emotion of the album is Peterson's, his dominating force is the blues in all its shades of intensity. From the leisurely ease of *Things Ain't What They Used to Be* to the brilliant sustained pace of *Honey Dripper*, the sources are varied but the underlying roots identical, the earthy candour of a form that has served all periods and styles of jazz with equal ferocity. In a way, the blues separates the man from the boys in jazz, for an amount of technical trickery or experimental proximity can shield an inadequate talent from its demands. The first time I ever saw Peterson perform, in London in 1953, he opened with a medium-tempo blues, and I have never forgotten the impact he made, an impact repeated time and again in this collection.

There is a vitality about the greatest jazz which is immediately recognizable, and it is this quality in his work which contributes so vividly to Peterson's position as the outstanding pianist of his generation. It asserts itself at the crucial moments with unflinching constancy. After the theme statement of *Band Call*, when Peterson moves into his improvisation, his relaxation is quite sudden. There are hints of limitless untapped power and dazzling melodic invention, and as the solo gathers impetus, it becomes clear that the player is a mature master of his art.


In *Honey Dripper*, at the point where Ed Thigpen increases the rhythmic pressure, and above all at that moment in *Moten Swing* where, having stated the theme, Peterson takes a two-bar break into his solo, the same effect is created, of power wedded to relaxation, of the curious duality of mood that jazz evokes, the serenity and the intensity, with the evident enjoyment of the musician serving as the emotional springboard for the entire performance.

The blues in its starkest form utilizes a minimal harmonic vocabulary, which is why it leaves a blank set with one or two more elaborately constructed pieces is often a wasteful idea. In the choice of one ballad in particular, Peterson flies yet again in the face of convention, of tradition, of nostalgia and the small-time clichés with long memories. It is hardly possible to hear the first few bars of *I Got It Bad* and *That Ain't Good* without playing back twenty years and savouring in the mind once again the lilting grace of Ivie Anderson and the fragility of Johnny Hodges' alto playing on the original Ellington recording. Peterson of course makes no attempt to echo Hodges or Ivie Anderson or anybody else, and achieves a version which already numbers among its admirers Duke Ellington himself.

With Ray Brown and Ed Thigpen, Peterson has now arrived at what is probably the best musical setting for his gifts that he has ever enjoyed. That break in *Moten Swing* which typifies the whole album, is a telling demonstration of the importance to musicians of group thinking and feeling. Brown and Thigpen await poised, for the short break to end. When it does, they both re-enter with perfect timing and an exact reading of the mood of that precise moment. It is this kind of expertise which make the Peterson Trio one of the most enlightening experiences that jazz today has to offer.

BENNY GREEN

Author, *THE RELUCTANT ART* (Harvill Press)



**THE OSCAR PETERSON TRIO**  
**NIGHT TRAIN**

## NIGHT TRAIN: THE ORIGINAL LINER NOTES

"The past is hidden somewhere outside the realm, beyond the reach of the intellect," wrote Proust, "in some material object which we do not suspect." One of the most potent of all these material objects is a sheet of printed music and the sounds it conveys, as Proust and countless other writers have acknowledged. That is why, it is a brave man indeed who would make an album composed of material which he knows belongs in the past consciousness of those likely to listen to it. The musician who does this will be grappling with all kinds of extra-musical intangibles, because when it comes to the past, we are all conservatives at heart.

Oscar Peterson's programme in this album deliberately challenges the russet glow of fond reminiscence and, it seems to me, challenges it triumphantly. Each of the themes he plays has its aura in the jazz past, and, more significant still, has upon it the indelible stamp of previous definitive versions. No matter. Peterson overcomes this terrifying handicap because the force of his own personality is as strong, sometimes stronger, than the originals. Even when he takes a piece like "Night Train", tailored for the concerted ensemble of a big band, he gives the impression that the trio is the best conceivable setting for the tune. Indeed, there are more overtones of orchestral richness in his "Night Train" than in most of the big band versions I can remember.

If the dominant emotion of the album is Pastness, its dominant form is the Blues in all its shades of intensity, from the leisurely case of "Things Ain't What They Used to Be" to the brilliant sustained pace of "Honeydripper". The sources are varied but the underlying roots identical, the earthy candour of a form that has served all periods and styles of jazz with equal loyalty. In a way, the Blues separates the men from the boys in jazz, for no amount of technical trickery or experimental precocity can shield an inadequate talent from its demands.

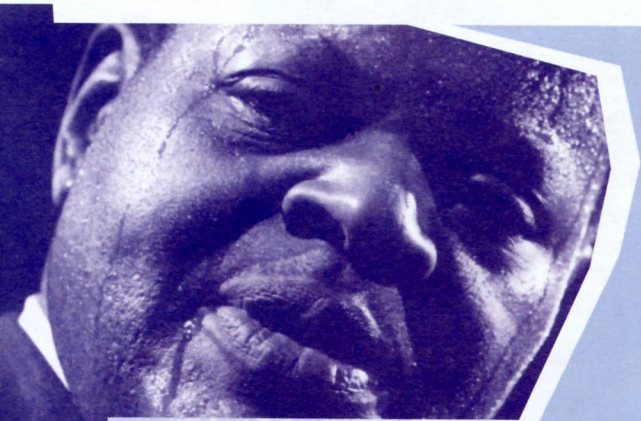
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TAPE LEGEND



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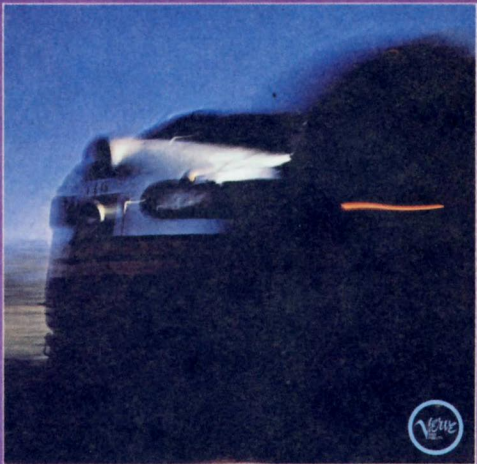
Benny Green



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OSCAR PETERSON, *piano*  
RAY BROWN, *bass*  
ED THIGPEN, *drums*

## side one

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4. BAGS' GROOVE *BMJ* 5:12
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