LEGENDS

are told and retold. Stories get simplified, certain details get amplified, overshadowing others. Miles Davis’s 45-year career is filled with them: a musical journey containing so much music and so many significant moments that a compression of ideas is needed to grasp it all. Miles himself is guilty of such reduction, like his way of remembering a tour of Europe in early spring 1960.

“Norman Granz had booked me and my band on a European tour,” Miles wrote in 1989. “[Coltrane] decided to go with us, but he grumbled and complained and sat by himself the whole time we were over there. He gave me notice he would be leaving the group when we got home.”

As overseas jazz tours went back then, it was longer than most, running for three weeks from March 21 through April 10.

It featured three top headliners—Miles, Oscar Peterson, and Stan Getz—and the official title per the program was “Norman Granz’ JATP Presents Jazz Winners 1960”; a Jazz At The Philharmonic project produced by jazz impresario Norman Granz in partnership with different promoters in each country, starting in France, then Sweden, Denmark, West Germany, Switzerland, Austria, and Holland. Most shows sold to capacity and reviews were uniformly positive, focusing often on Miles. In late April, Billboard magazine reported from Copenhagen on how the JATP performance on March 24 was the first show “to draw full houses” in 1960, and that “the critics were laudatory, but carped about ‘too many stars’—they wanted more of Miles Davis.”

The tour held a few firsts for Miles. It was a career breakthrough for him in Europe,
upgrading from the jazz club circuit in the U.S. to the level of international music star, playing major theaters in the capitals of Western Europe, appearing in tailored tuxedos, accompanied by his new, stunning wife Frances, greeting old and new friends backstage. The depth of Europe’s appreciation can be intuited in photographs from the tour: the before-show hubbub and visits from other stars in Paris; a scrum of photographers jockeying for position as Miles and the quintet played.

The tour also marked Miles’s first time performing overseas with his own ensemble—a significant point of arrival for any touring musician. In early 1960, Miles was leading a quintet that featured most of the lineup from his recent recording Kind of Blue: pianist Wynton Kelly, bassist Paul Chambers, drummer Jimmy Cobb, and tenor saxophonist John Coltrane.*

Much happened on that 1960 tour onstage and off, including powerful, emotionally charged performances in which one can hear the swinging, divergent energy of a band, and the unfiltered reactions of the European audiences: the crowd responses are indeed an inherent part of these
historic performances. On the whole, the recordings from that tour—some concerts to a higher degree of fidelity than others—have never been released officially, with proper permissions and state-of-the-art production. The Final Tour: The Bootleg Series, Vol. 6 offers five of the best recorded shows from the 1960 tour: two sets from Paris’s L’Olympia on Monday, March 21; two sets from the next night at Stockholm’s Konserthuset; and one from Copenhagen’s Tivoli Koncertsal three days later, on March 24.

The common judgement on this music agrees with Miles’s recollection—that it captures a great jazz ensemble audibly straining to hold itself together, its members pushing towards different directions, Coltrane to an extreme. “When that happens,” Miles once complained in his autobiography, “the magic is gone out of a band.” Yet one cannot agree with the music itself—what one hears from these five sets. There’s plenty of magic being conjured here in the music and between the musicians themselves.

An equally convincing interpretation of the 1960 situation is that Miles and his quintet were redefining what a great band could sound like, and how much music it could contain—at one time, in one concert, even in one tune. It’s not that the band members were so much apart, but rather that each were more themselves within the same unit—that divergence could co-exist and make music together. It’s this idea that grew from Miles’s 1950s groups and that soon became his primary directive to all future sidemen through the ‘60s and ‘70s, until his passing in 1991: Figure out what to do with the freedom in the music. Bring your identity and your own ideas to the mix. Surprise me!

Surprise was certainly a big part of the imprint left by Miles’s quintet on that 1960 tour—surprise, colored by emotion, and brought on primarily by one band member in particular. As Miles remembered it, the European journey stood out less for the music performed and more for the tension he experienced from his star saxophonist. Jimmy Cobb backs him up to a degree, recalling that the tour “seemed like it was a last minute kind of a situation, because Coltrane was out there with the one blue suit he wore, a white shirt, one other white shirt, an airline bag and some rum-flavored Lifesavers that he liked. That’s all he had. Miles probably talked him into doing it for the last time.”
Some of the recordings certainly seem to bear out this narrative of Coltrane's displeasure, that he was blowing frustration from his horn–especially the opening night of the tour in Paris. From the first number of the early set, Coltrane's improvisations leap out with a rough intensity–strange and new to French audiences: slurs and vocal-like honks that soon became a familiar part of the avant-garde jazz vocabulary, but which at that point seemed to usher from some inner turmoil. Next to Miles's more subdued trumpet, Coltrane's playing stood out in stark, disconcerting contrast. During the saxophonist's lengthy improvisations, Miles exited the stage and audience members can be heard murmuring, whistling, even arguing among themselves.

Such was the controversy engendered by Coltrane at L'Olympia that both of France's jazz publications at the time, Jazz Hot and Jazz, dedicated themselves to lengthy exegeses calling on multiple experts to deal with Coltrane specifically: What was he doing? Was it valid? Was it jazz?
The music recorded on that 1960 tour and included herein captures a truly Janus-like moment: Miles and his band staking a stylistic middle ground between, on one hand, the familiar standards of the 1940s and ’50s—"Bye Bye Blackbird", "On Green Dolphin Street", "All Of You"—on the other, new, open-ended structures, with an emotionally ambivalent affect—"So What", "All Blues"—modal compositions demanding a focus on personal lyricism. The music bristles, both old and new, the familiar and unfamiliar, as the band gets it all to swing and snap and make sense in the same setlist.

It was the range of those styles, all at once, that both exposed the extreme differences in personal approaches of the players, and tested the average listener in 1960. This could explain why—after the strong vocal reaction in Paris—Miles reworked the ballads-and-bop playlist to a more focused, musically consistent set in Stockholm, Copenhagen, and other cities, balancing new modal tunes with only two or three well-chosen standards. It was a strategic move as well, allowing Coltrane the larger canvas he needed for his solos, giving Miles and Kelly more elbow room as well, and removed the rushed imbalance that resulted from including too many tunes.

Whatever sentiment individual concertgoers felt on that tour—excitement or confusion, distance or delight—the band was met with general, energetic applause. There was an overriding sense that this music was cutting edge, that it deserved top priority and attention. In a few cities, Granz got to introduce the band members one by one—an act rarely done in the club circuit back home—and the level of recognition and appreciation is palpable.

Night by night, there was much to appreciate and enjoy: Miles’s penchant for storytelling on the various versions of "So What", the tune retaining its air of mystery despite the fact that it had inevitably shifted to a faster tempo than the original recording. In Coltrane’s solo on "So What" from the first set in Paris, he plays an unmistakable echo of "Impressions"—the tune he was in the midst of developing, based on the same harmonic structure and which he would later record.

While much of the material might suggest a more somber if sophisticated atmosphere, one can hear Davis being light and having fun—even silly—like on "Walkin’" from the first set in Stockholm, almost quoting "Dixie", shifting gears and intention with a wink. The Coltrane
Solo that follows on “Walkin’” can’t help but pick up on the giddy feel at the outset, yet it doesn’t take long before he’s moving the tune to a weightier, contrasting exercise of harmonic stacking—determinedly testing the bandwidth of the performance with more musical information than most jazz fans were accustomed to receiving in one evening, let alone in one improvisation.

Many of Coltrane’s improvisations follow the same pattern—first “in”, then “out”—starting off on familiar ground, lyrical with his characteristic blues cry, then diving deeper into experimental territory, pushing on the gas, riding long, free-flowing lines and delving into multiphonic asides, finally coming back up for air—clear-toned and sharply pronounced.

On most tunes, the focus turns from Coltrane to Kelly, and at times, it sounds like old friends completing each other’s statements. Check the handoff on “On Green Dolphin Street” from Copenhagen, and the way the pianist builds in intensity and delight, to a flurry of block chords and release (and dig Chambers’s fluid, funky arco improvisation just after). Then compare how Coltrane’s far-ranging solo on “All Blues”, one tune later, replete with harmonic-rich, split-tone sequences, inspires Kelly to go far-and-wide himself—from rootsy single lines to sophisticated flourishes, rolling figures (drawing to mind Bill Evans’s choice on the original recording), and hard-hit chords to bring it to a dramatic close.

Through it all, there are musical details specific to each player: Miles’s sense of internal anguish and external release, often accentuated by his use of the mute. Kelly’s joyous swing feel—an unerring, rhythmic drive that leaves generous room to breathe and to smile. The anchor and lift that was Chambers and Cobb—defining the structures and maintaining the dance in the music. Coltrane’s extended, exhilarating improvisations filled with roughly hewn glissandos that predicted the future, but in ’60 raised eyebrows and questions—especially on the opening night of the tour.
Today, these musical, personal, and public rumblings all feel part of a pivotal event, and that's truly what the 1960 spring tour of Europe was. And there are a few contributing factors—reasons for Coltrane's musical extremes—that merit mention.

One was that what Coltrane was doing in fact had a lot to do with what Miles had started with Kind of Blue, the trumpeter's modal experiments proving to be the launching pad that propelled the saxophonist out of the band to another musical plane. Miles, Kelly, Chambers and Cobb were exploring a new modal world; Coltrane was already using that music to explode into another.

Another factor had to do with Coltrane's health. Through much of 1959—from May through the end of the year, when he finally broke free from Miles and pursued his own gigs exclusively—the saxophonist was dealing with debilitating dental issues that had plagued him since early adult years and finally caught up with him. Sometime in late May, he was fitted with a bridge that replaced and/or buttressed eight rotting front teeth, a necessary procedure that caused even Miles consternation ("Miles beg[ged] him not to have any teeth pulled for fear it would change his sound," according to biographer John Szwed.). The bridge must have had an impact on Coltrane's playing, at least to the degree that he had to delicately adjust his embouchure to accommodate the fitting.

Evidence of that delicacy—yet another factor unknown to European audiences—is revealed in the fact that Coltrane's individual musical development at this time was largely unrecorded. Suddenly, in mid-'59, Coltrane stopped recording. This, after being busy and in demand in the studio the two years before—23 sessions in '57, 18 in '58—and just a few weeks after recording most of the music for Giant Steps, his debut with Atlantic Records. His hiatus lasted for almost seven months—from May 5 to November 24—and then, after a few sessions, he stayed away from the studio for another seven-month period from December 2 to June 28, 1960.

There were no albums being released by which jazz fans could track Coltrane's progress. Dental bridge notwithstanding—and perhaps partly because of it—Coltrane's development had shifted into high gear.
From 1959 to '60, he was at the height of his so-called "sheets of sound" phase, employing dense, fast-played patterns suggesting multiple harmonies. A few months after the European tour, Coltrane told Downbeat magazine of that period:

I thought in groups of notes, not of one note at a time. I tried to place these groups on the accents and emphasize the strong beats...sometimes what I was doing clashed harmonically with the piano...I haven't completely abandoned this approach, but sometimes it wasn't broad enough...

The resulting rhythmic intensity was startling, but perhaps the most arresting feature of Coltrane's playing at the time was his experimentation with multiphonics—playing more than one note at a time—producing a rough, raspy edge that some heard as a problem with the saxophone, or with the saxophonist. Coltrane credited the pianist Thelonious Monk as "one of the first to show me how to make two or three notes at one
time on tenor”, and developed the idea, utilizing it on two tracks—“Fifth House” and especially “Harmonique”—for his December 2, 1959 session, both released on his second Atlantic album, Coltrane Jazz.

Most of these changes took place out of sight, yet to appear on recordings. Coltrane Jazz was released in 1961 in the U.S. and months later in Europe, leaving jazz fans in ’60 unaware of his sonic shifts, wondering about his throaty, emotional exhortations. Where many inferred rancor in his playing, Coltrane maintained he was challenging himself, working things out.

“Do you feel angry?” the Swedish deejay Carl-Erik Lindgren asked Coltrane after their first set in Stockholm on that tour—a brief interview that is included on The Final Tour.

“No, I don’t,” Coltrane replied. “I was talking to a fellow the other day, and I told him, the reason I play so many sounds, maybe it sounds angry, I’m trying so many things at one time. I haven’t sorted them out.”

Coltrane was sorting a lot out at the time—his sound, his compositional approach, his departure from the Miles collective—so it’s easy to see how these could be conflated to explain his playing at
the time. Coltrane was building his own band and booking his own gigs through most of 1959. Miles even extended a hand, hooking him up with his booking agent and his lawyer, the latter who helped Coltrane start his own music publishing company—Jowcol Music, and his contract with the small Prestige label, and sign a more lucrative contract with the midsize Atlantic Records.

Miles's assistance deferred the inevitable; it was with reluctance that Coltrane agreed to do one last tour with Miles, bringing with him a more withdrawn attitude, and a bristling, changed saxophone sound. "That's the way he played every night, you know?" recalls Jimmy Cobb. "By that time he was through playing Miles's stuff. He had outgrown everybody's band except his own."

"I heard you were splitting the Miles group here, and trying something on your own," the deejay asked Coltrane in Stockholm.

"Yeah, I am," was his curt answer.

One door closes, another swings open. In 1960, Miles became a permanent fixture on the international touring map. His presence in Europe began with his first trip overseas at the age
The 1960 JATP tour proved to be not only Coltrane’s last run at Miles’s side, but the last appearances of his career as a sideman. The four years the saxophonist spent in Miles’s group—from 1955 through ’59—amounted to one of the most celebrated bondings in modern jazz, catapulting the unknown saxophonist from local obscurity to national renown, evolving from faltering insecurity to chance-taking confidence. The two had been born the same year and grown to be so different in temperament and manner. Yet, at the core, they were equals in their obsession with the inner workings of jazz, and their appetite for challenge and surprise.

Upon his return home in April 1960, Coltrane got back to leading his own band, pursuing his own musical path, and—at a pace unmatched by any of his peers—becoming the new jazz star to watch.

Of the many benefits Coltrane received from Miles, it can be argued that their 1960 tour together was one of the most valuable, as it introduced the saxophonist to European audiences as a thrilling live performer, which soon yielded years of well-paying gigs. By 1961, promoters in Great Britain, France, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and West Germany all invited Coltrane to return with his own band, the quintet he would famously record with at the Village Vanguard that same year: multi-instrumentalist Eric Dolphy, pianist McCoy Tyner, bassist Reggie Workman, and drummer Elvin Jones. Coltrane, like Davis, would be asked back to Europe on a regular basis.

Cultivating greatness at the right moment is one thing; knowing when to let it go, that’s a different skill. Decades after the hubbub and applause of these 1960 concerts faded, Miles was speaking with the great jazz journalist Ralph J. Gleason. The writer noted that Miles’s music had become complicated enough to demand five tenor saxophonists. Gleason remembered,

*It’s the group’s people that you associate with, you know. It’s not me. It’s them. People like Herbie Hancock, Chick Corea, those people that I work with. Especially when they get in their creative period. People have creative periods, periods when they [snap fingers three times]...I recognize it in other people. — Miles Davis to Ben Sidran, 1986*

Miles’s talents as a bandleader were multiple and intuitive. He was a manipulator of musical situations, a creator of moods and contrasts, a master band-builder. One power he possessed was as un-teachable as it was uncanny—the ability to foretell musical greatness, to identify talent before it reaches maturity. In late 1955 Miles auditioned an unproven saxophonist from Philadelphia, whom he hired and who then grew to maturity under his tutelage.

It was Coltrane. Miles’s first and greatest discovery. He knew that; he never stopped knowing that.

— Ashley Kahn, December 2017

*There are two interesting details regarding the 1960 tour that bear mention for the light they add to the Miles-Coltrane situation. The first is the fact that vibraphonist Buddy Montgomery (brother to guitarist Wes and bassist Monk) was booked to be part of Miles’s touring group as well. He had...*
played with the quintet on a West Coast run in February and early March 1960. Montgomery’s name was even listed in the program Granz printed for the ensuing European tour.

The idea of Miles touring with vibes—how different his trumpet sounded set off by the buzz and ping of that instrument; how Montgomery’s soloing might’ve played out in modal pieces like “So What”—is intriguing to consider. The notion also brings to mind the memorable match-ups of Miles with vibist Milt Jackson on the Prestige label (“Bags’ Groove”, “Dr. Jackie”) and on the 1956 European Birdland All Star Tour.

Buddy Montgomery never made it, apparently due to an intense fear of flying he experienced at the last minute. As a result, Miles’s need for Coltrane to remain with the tour was sudden and dire. Even so—according to Norman Granz—there was one thing the bandleader was unwilling to do.

“[Miles’s] autobiography... Miles talked about Coltrane not wanting to go on tour,” Granz told his biographer Tad Hershorn. “Miles was getting enough to pay [Coltrane], but he wouldn’t pay him any more.”

According to the promoter, he stepped in and paid Coltrane directly—$1,000 a week from me. Now that’s the story.

Each party assuredly had respective takes on the situation, but certainly the producer and trumpeter excelled at bringing out the stubborn in each other—as another detail from the tour reveals. According to Hershorn, Miles “decided at the last minute not to play three half-hour shows that Granz had negotiated with German television.” In the long run, it was Coltrane who benefited from Miles’s reluctance: he made his debut on European TV as the leader in the broadcast, in a 35-minute studio performance that opened with him along with Kelly, Chambers, and Cobb ("On Green Dolphin Street", "Walkin’"/"The Theme"); followed by a medley of "Autumn Leaves" (with the rhythm section alone), "What’s New" (featuring Coltrane), "Autumn In New York" (featuring Stan Getz) and an extended take of Thelonious Monk’s "Hacksack", with Oscar Peterson taking over on piano, and Coltrane and Getz blowing harmony lines and solos.
Ir: Miles and Frances Davis; Budd Johnson with Miles; Miles with Frances Davis to his left; Miles and unidentified man.
OLYMPIA, PARIS, FRANCE
MARCH 21, 1960

CD 1

FIRST CONCERT
1. All Of You 17:05
   (Cole Porter)
2. So What 13:06
   (Miles Davis)
3. On Green Dolphin Street 14:59
   (Bronislaw Kaper-Ned Washington)

SECOND CONCERT
4. Walkin' 15:52
   (Richard Carpenter)

TIVOLIS KONCERTSAL,
COPENHAGEN, DENMARK
MARCH 24, 1960

5. Introduction (by Norman Granz) 0:59
6. So What 14:37
   (Miles Davis)
7. On Green Dolphin Street 14:35
   (N. Washington-B. Kaper)
8. All Blues 15:31
   (Miles Davis)
9. The Theme (incomplete) 0:31
   (Miles Davis)

KONSERTHUSEN, STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN
MARCH 22, 1960

CD 2

PARIS SECOND CONCERT CONTINUED
1. Bye Bye Blackbird 14:01
   (Ray Henderson-Mort Dixon)
2. 'Round Midnight 5:37
   (Thelonious Monk-Coote Williams-Bernie Hanighen)
3. Oleo 4:22
   (Sonny Rollins)
4. The Theme 0:50
   (Miles Davis)

CD 3

FIRST CONCERT
1. Introduction (by Norman Granz) 1:11
2. So What 10:35
   (Miles Davis)
3. Fran Dance 7:25
   (Miles Davis)
4. Walkin' 16:21
   (Richard Carpenter)
5. The Theme 0:53
   (Miles Davis)

STOCKHOLM SECOND CONCERT
1. So What 15:20
   (Miles Davis)
2. On Green Dolphin Street 13:40
   (Bronislaw Kaper-Ned Washington)
3. All Blues 16:10
   (Miles Davis)
4. The Theme 0:59
   (Miles Davis)

INTERVIEW
5. John Coltrane interview
   (by Carl-Erik Lindgren) 6:13

MILES
DAVIS &
JOHN
COLTRANE
THE FINAL TOUR
THE BOOTLEG SERIES, VOL. 6
MILES DAVIS, trumpet
JOHN COLTRANE, tenor sax
WYNTON KELLY, piano
PAUL CHAMBERS, bass
JIMMY COBB, drums

Original Concerts Produced by Norman Granz
as part of the Spring 1960 Jazz At The
Philharmonic European Tour

John Coltrane appears courtesy of Atlantic Records

This is the first legitimate commercial issue of this
material. Copenhagen is taken from the original radio
source while the sources for Paris and Stockholm come
from the archives of the producers.

Box Set Produced for release by Steve Berkowitz,
Michael Cuscuna and Richard Seidel

Mastered by Mark Wilder,
Battery Studios, New York City

Executive Producers: Erin Davis,
Cheryl Davis and Vince Wilburn, Jr.

Mastering Coordination by Donna Kloepfer
and Vanessa Gonzalez, Battery

Product Direction: Jim Lane
Project Direction: Tara Master
Art Direction & Design: Jeff Schulz
Photography: Jean-Pierre Leloir, Bengt H
Malmqvist/Berry Produktion,
Franz Hubmann/Imagno/Getty Images

Thank you Steve Tallamy, Rie Rosendahl,
DR Byen, Larry Cohn, John Jackson, Jeffrey
Schulberg, Adam Block, Ashley Kahn,
Darryl Porter

Special thanks to Jan Lohmann and Peter Losin