

# the Microscopic Septet



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“...a glorious fit.”  
*The New Yorker*

## About *Friday the 13th: The Micros Play Monk*

If the Micros have a spiritual beacon, it's Thelonious Monk. Like the maverick bebop pianist, they persevere, and their expanding core audience thrives on their impeccable arrangements, terse, angular solos, and devil-may-care attitude. But Monk and the Micros have something else in common as well.

Johnston tells a story: “Someone once walked up to Monk and said, ‘You know, Monk, people are laughing at your music.’ Monk replied, ‘Let ‘em laugh. People need to laugh a little more.’” [Richard Gehr, *Newsday*, New York, 1989]

The music of Thelonious Monk has been a part of the Microscopic Septet literally from day one. In 1974 pianist Joel Forrester walked, uninvited, into an apartment in the Bowery neighborhood of New York City, drawn by the sounds of soprano saxophonist and then-stranger Phillip Johnston playing the Monk tune “Well You Needn’t” wafting through the windows to the street. This chance encounter sparked both a friendship and a professional relationship that, in turn, sparked one of New York’s most legendary and entertaining ensembles of American jazz, the Microscopic Septet.

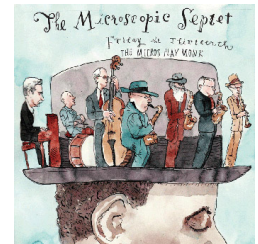


Monk’s music reverberated on multiple levels for the musicians across the years. Another chance encounter, following Forrester’s performance of Monk’s “Pannonica” at a chicken and ribs place called West Boondock, forged Forrester’s friendship with the Baroness Pannonica de Koenigswarter. Through the Baroness, Forrester would ultimately meet and periodically play piano for Monk himself.

Late jazz composer and pianist [Thelonious Sphere Monk](#) (1917–82) is one of the top creative deities in the pantheon of American Jazz Greats. Once considered radical and appreciated by only a small cognoscenti, Monk’s tunes are now beloved standards and may well be the most frequently covered jazz tunes on record. A surge of interest in the composer this past year led 2010 to be called “The Year of the Monk.”

Monk’s music has been an inspiration and guiding light for Micros co-leaders and co-composers Johnston and Forrester, but although frequently covering Monk’s tunes in performance, the Micros, due to release constraints, only ever formally recorded Forrester’s arrangement of “Crepuscule with Nellie,” which appeared on their 1986 release *Off Beat Glory*.

The 2010 release of the Microscopic Septet’s *Friday the 13th: The Micros Play Monk* rectifies this omission. Featuring original arrangements of 12 Monk tunes, half from “back in the day” and half newly written for this recording, the Microscopic Septet make clear their line of descent from Monk. The humor and angularity of Monk’s compositions mesh easily and joyfully with the elaboration and juxtaposition of the Micros-style arranging. Not a dry deconstruction, the album is a celebration of Monk by a group that can arguably be called his most sensitive and



### TRACK LISTING

1. Brilliant Corners (5:09)
  2. Friday the 13th (5:45)
  3. Gallop's Gallop (5:22)
  4. Teo (4:29)
  5. Pannonica (5:15)
  6. Evidence (5:42)
  7. We See (5:50)
  8. Off Minor (4:34)
  9. Bye-Ya (3:37)
  10. Worry Later (5:04)
  11. Misterioso (5:39)
  12. Epistrophe (2:54)
- Buy *Friday the 13th: The Micros Play Monk* on [Cuneiform Records](#), [iTunes](#), and [Amazon](#).

### AWARDS

**Winner: Best Jazz Band**, 2010 New York Performance Awards

### BEST OF... LISTS

- 59th Annual *DownBeat* Critics Poll: **No. 5 Jazz Group**
- 2010 *Village Voice* Jazz Critics Poll: **No. 25**
- WNYC-FM **Best Live Performances of 2010**
- Art Lange’s Second Top Ten of 2010: **No. 20**
- W. Royal Stokes Best 10 Jazz CDS of 2010: **No. 7**
- Ken Dryden: Top Releases of 2010
- Paul Blair: Top 14 Jazz CDs of 2010
- Bob Blumenthal: Top 6 of 2010

Keep up with the Micros:



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sensational heirs.

Featuring artwork by *The New Yorker* artist [Barry Blitt](#) of the infamous Michelle and Barack Obama "fist-bump" cover and liner notes by jazz critic and long-time Micros fan Peter Keepnews, *Friday the 13th* is surprising yet inevitable, a long overdue party with the master at which The Micros Play Monk.

Since its founding in 1980, the Micros have been responsible for some of the most captivating, memorable, and entertaining original tunes of the past 40 years in American jazz. Transcending mere tribute, the Microscopic Septet's *Friday the 13th* distills Monk's heady and humorous essence, revives his iconoclastic spirit, and revels in, and with, the creative compositions of Thelonious Monk.

## More *Friday the 13th* in the Media



DECEMBER 11, 2010

### The Micros Keep Monk 'Knotty'

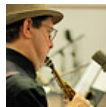
*The Wall Street Journal*



DECEMBER 1, 2010

### In Studio: Microscopic Septet

*Soundcheck*, WNYC-FM



DECEMBER 7, 2010

### Interview and Studio Session: Microscopic Septet

*The Checkout*, WBGO-FM



OCTOBER 2010

### *Point of Departure* Roundtable

*Point of Departure*, Issue 31



DECEMBER 2, 2010

### December Gig at Birdland

*The Pace Report*



OCTOBER 8, 2010

### How Do You Cover Thelonious Monk?

*A Blog Supreme*, WNPR

[Accolades for \*Friday the 13th\*](#)