

Monty Alexander. (Pablo Records 2310-836) — Monty Alexander, to use a Down Beat poll cliché, is certainly "talent deserving of wider recognition." This pianist is technically astonishing — clear and cohesive and thoroughly swinging. His broad, expansive style is reminiscent of Phineas Newborn. On this date he is impeccably backed by Andrew Simpkins on bass and Frank Gant on drums. Simpkins is a fine bassist, and his off-mike vocal accompaniment on his solo spots really brings home the groove. Alexander has chosen a nice mix of jazz tunes and standards. One outstanding cut is "Triticism," Lucky Thompson's sprightly bebop head, which is humorously rendered in rapid-fire unison lines by Alexander. His ballad style is luminous and at times almost ornate, but never becomes syrupy. He's a clean player, enhanced by the excellent recording quality on this album.

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