

= Dark Magus =

Dark Magus is a live double album by American jazz composer and trumpeter Miles Davis . It was recorded on March 30 , 1974 , at Carnegie Hall in New York City . Davis ' group at the time included bassist Michael Henderson , drummer Al Foster , percussionist James Mtume , saxophonist Dave Liebman , and guitarists Pete Cosey and Reggie Lucas . He also used the show to audition saxophonist Azar Lawrence and guitarist Dominique Gaumont . Dark Magus was produced by Teo Macero and featured four two @-@ part recordings titled after Swahili names for the numbers one through four .

Dark Magus was released after Davis ' 1975 retirement , upon which his label , Columbia Records , issued several albums of various outtakes . After releasing the live recordings Agharta (1975) and Pangaea (1976) , Columbia decided that they did not approve of the albums and released Dark Magus only in Japan . It was issued in 1977 by CBS @-@ Sony . The label 's A & R executive Tatsu Nosaki suggested the album 's title , which referred to the Magus from the Zoroastrian religion .

Along with Davis ' other records during the 1970s , Dark Magus was received ambivalently by contemporary music critics , but it inspired noise rock acts during the late 1970s and the experimental funk artists of the 1980s . The album was not released in the United States until July 1997 , when it was reissued by Sony Records and Legacy Records . In retrospective reviews , critics praised its jazz @-@ rock aesthetic and the group members ' performances , and some believed certain parts foreshadowed jungle music .

= = Background = =

Davis was 47 years old when he was asked to play Carnegie Hall in 1974 , which followed four years of relentless touring . He had played the venue numerous times before and recorded a live album there in 1961 . By 1974 , Davis had been dealing with depression , cocaine and sex addictions , and several health problems , including osteoarthritis , bursitis , and sickle @-@ cell anemia . He had also lost respect with both critics and his contemporaries because of his musical explorations into more rock- and funk @-@ oriented sounds . Influenced by Karlheinz Stockhausen , Davis wanted to avoid individual songs and instead record extended movements that developed into a different composition . He played his trumpet sparsely and became less of the focal point for his band , whom he allowed more freedom to improvise and with whom he rarely rehearsed , so that the young musicians he enlisted would be tested to learn and play together onstage .

The March 30 , 1974 , concert featured an ethnically and age @-@ diverse audience that included young hippies and old , wealthy attendees . According to Magnet magazine 's Bryan Bierman , " the hip , ' with it ' kids [sat] side @-@ by @-@ side with middle @-@ aged tuxedoed couples , expecting to hear ' My Funny Valentine . ' " Although he lived 15 minutes away , Davis arrived at the venue more than an hour late . When the band walked out onstage , he followed with his back turned to the audience . He casually strolled onstage while the band was setting up and began to play , to which they responded by playing a dense rhythm in unison . Saxophonist Dave Liebman , who wrote the liner notes for Dark Magus , later said of how the show began : " It is his whim .. That 's the thing ! ... Miles can do that and have three thousand musicians follow him . Right ? So what I learned in that respect from Miles was to be able to watch him and be on his case " .

Davis also used the show to audition two new members ? tenor saxophonist Azar Lawrence and guitarist Dominique Gaumont . Lawrence was the most highly regarded young saxophonist at the time ; Davis enlisted Gaumont in response to incumbent guitarist Reggie Lucas 's demand for a pay raise . Although it was unexpected , Liebman later characterized the move as typical of Davis : " What he was doing ? which he often does at big kinda gigs like that ? is change the shit up , by doing something totally out . Totally unexpected . I mean , we had been a band together on the road for a year ... And then , suddenly , a live date , New York City , Carnegie Hall , the cat pulls two cats who never even saw each other . I mean , you gotta say , ' Is the man mad or is he ? he 's either mad or extremely subtle . "

= = Composition and performance = =

Dark Magus features four two @-@ part compositions with an average length of 25 minutes each . The album 's music was unrehearsed and eschewed melody for improvisations around funk rhythms and grooves . According to AllMusic 's Thom Jurek , rhythms , colors , and keys " would shift and change on a whim from Davis . " Davis eschewed his previous performances ' keyboardists for a three @-@ guitar line @-@ up of Reggie Lucas , Dominique Gaumont , and Pete Cosey , who had a penchant for guitar wails and pedal effects . Davis often stopped the band with hand signals and created empty spaces , which were longer than traditional jazz breaks , and encouraged the soloists to fill them with exaggerated cadenzas .

Davis only soloed intermittently or played his Yamaha organ . He played trumpet on " Moja " and both trumpet and organ on the other pieces . The second half of " Moja " is distinguished by a long ballad sequence introduced by Liebman and continued by Lucas and Davis . " Moja " also included a theme from " Nne " . On " Tatu " , Gaumont followed Lucas 's solo with a long passage characterized by fuzzy wah @-@ wah effects , and Lawrence played briefly with Liebman in a duet before his own disjointed solo . " Tatu " ended with a rendition of " Calypso Frelimo " . During the first part of " Nne " , they played the Davis @-@ penned composition " Ife " . Near the end of " Nne " , Davis played a short blues .

Robert Christgau described the aesthetic on Dark Magus as a culmination of Davis ' previous albums and " bifurcated , like jazz @-@ rock again " . He argued that Davis left the two elements ? jazz and rock ? " distinct and recognizable " , whereas " pure funk " would have subsumed them both " in a new conception , albeit one that " favors rock . Christgau attributed the album 's jazz input to Lawrence 's " Coltranesque " saxophone , and the rock elements to guitarists Lucas and Gaumont , who " wah @-@ riff [ed] the rhythm " , and Pete Cosey , who produced " his own wah @-@ wah @-@ inflected noise into the arena @-@ rock stratosphere . " Erik Davis compared Davis ' trumpet sound to " a mournful but pissed @-@ off banshee " , and Cosey , Lucas , and Gaumont to " somewhere between and beyond James Brown and Can " , amid " quiet percussion passages [that] emerge like moonlit clearings " .

= = Release and reception = =

Dark Magus was released after Davis ' retirement , when his label , Columbia Records , issued several albums of various outtakes . They released his live albums Agharta (1975) and Pangaea (1976) , but ultimately did not approve of Davis ' live recordings and chose to issue Dark Magus only in Japan . It was released in 1977 by CBS @-@ Sony , who used several engineering fades in the album 's production to shorten the original concert for the final release . The album 's four tracks were titled after Swahili names for the numbers one through four . Its title was suggested by Tatsu Nosaki , an A & R executive from CBS @-@ Sony , who were producing the album . According to Nosaki , " Magus ... is the founder of the ancient Persian religion , Zoroastrianism . " The album was not released in the United States until July 1997 , when it was reissued by Sony Records and Legacy Records . It was part of the labels ' reissue of five two @-@ disc live albums by Davis , including Black Beauty : Miles Davis at Fillmore West (1970) , Miles Davis at Fillmore (1970) , Live @-@ Evil (1971) , and In Concert (1973) . The reissued albums featured liner notes written by his sidemen .

Along with Davis ' other 1970s records , Dark Magus was received ambivalently by contemporary critics but became an inspiration to late 1970s noise rock acts and the experimental funk artists of the 1980s . Its 1997 reissue was ranked by Christgau as the 10th best album of the year in his list for The Village Voice 's annual Pazz & Jop critics ' poll . In 2001 , Q named it one of the " 50 Heaviest Albums of All Time " and called it " a maelstrom of uncut improvisational fury ... arguably the furthest out Miles ever got " . David Keenan placed it on his all @-@ time 105 best albums list for the Sunday Herald and said by ornamenting heavy grooves with tribal percussive instruments , wah @-@ wah effects , and otherworldly trumpet bursts , Davis had instinctively fused the most advanced elements of modern African @-@ American music . According to CODA critic Greg

Masters , Davis created among the most darkest and radical auras , feelings , and moods in 20th @-@ century music on Dark Magus .

In a retrospective review for JazzTimes , Tom Terrell said that the album 's kind of music would never be heard again and described it as " tomorrow 's sound yesterday ... a terrifyingly exhilarating aural asylum of wails , howls , clanks , chunks , telltale heartbeats , wah wah quacks , white noise and loud silences . " According to Down Beat , the frantic burbles of congas on " Moja " and " Tatu " predated oldschool jungle by 20 years , while Spin magazine 's Erik Davis found its anguished , ferocious music extremely impressive , especially when listened to loud . He contended that the group improvisation on tracks such as " Wili " foreshadowed the drum ' n ' bass genre : " Miles was invoking the primordial powers of the electronic urban jungle " . In The Penguin Guide to Jazz (1998) , Richard Cook and Brian Morton wrote that each performance comprises only " shadings and sanations of sound , and as one gets to know these recordings better one becomes almost fixated on the tiniest inflexions . " Pitchfork Media critic Jason Josephes viewed it as a highly valued Davis album that invokes a sense of coolness in listeners :

Just when you think the shit can 't get much higher , Miles comes in and hits the wah @-@ wah down hard on the horn and the next thing you know , you 're slappin ' five to the man upstairs ... By the rite of Dark Magus , I can fake the cool in no time flat .

In The Rolling Stone Album Guide (2004) , J. D. Considine wrote that Dark Magus expressed the band 's surging rhythms better than In Concert and offered a balance between their affinity for improvisation amidst their desire to rock . Jeff McCord of The Austin Chronicle found the performances impassioned , enduring , and highlighted by effectively competitive playing between each duo of saxophonists and guitarists . According to John Szwed , it has moments when all three guitarists and two saxophonists are " in dense and exalted free improvisation together , and Pete Cosey 's tunings , effects , excess , and sheer inventiveness took the guitar to the point where Hendrix , free jazz , and rhythm and blues proudly merged together . " By contrast , Don Heckman of the Los Angeles Times found the funk rhythms repetitive and Davis ' playing both limited and unexceptional . He panned the presence of tablas , electric sitar , and multiple guitars , and the music 's similarity to Hendrix , Sly Stone , and James Brown . AllMusic 's Thom Jurek called it an exaggerated and excessive showcase of Davis ' disoriented psyche and felt that , although the rhythm section is historically captivating , the other musicians ' playing is inconsistent , albeit enthralling .

= = Track listing = =

= = = Original double LP = = =

All tracks were composed by Miles Davis .

Record one

" Dark Magus ? Moja " ? 25 : 24

" Dark Magus ? Wili " ? 25 : 08

Record two

" Dark Magus ? Tatu " ? 25 : 20

" Dark Magus ? Nne " ? 25 : 32

= = = CD reissue = = =

Disc one

" Moja (Part 1) " ? 12 : 28

" Moja (Part 2) " ? 12 : 40

" Wili (Part 1) " ? 14 : 20

" Wili (Part 2) " ? 10 : 44

Disc two

" Tatu (Part 1) " ? 18 : 47

" Tatu (Part 2) (' Calypso Frelimo ') " ? 6 : 29

" Nne (Part 1) (' lfe ') " ? 15 : 19

" Nne (Part 2) " ? 10 : 11

= = Personnel = =

Pete Cosey ? electric guitar

Miles Davis ? electric trumpet with wah @-@ wah , Yamaha organ (" Wili " , " Tatu " , and " Nne ")

Al Foster ? drums

Dominique Gaumont ? electric guitar (" Tatu " , " Nne ")

Michael Henderson ? electric bass

Azar Lawrence ? tenor saxophone (" Tatu " , " Nne ")

Dave Liebman ? soprano saxophone , tenor saxophone

Reggie Lucas ? electric guitar

Teo Macero ? production

James Mtume ? percussion