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Charlene Soraia

Cover photo by Rick Gould

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# opening shots



## Garden Party

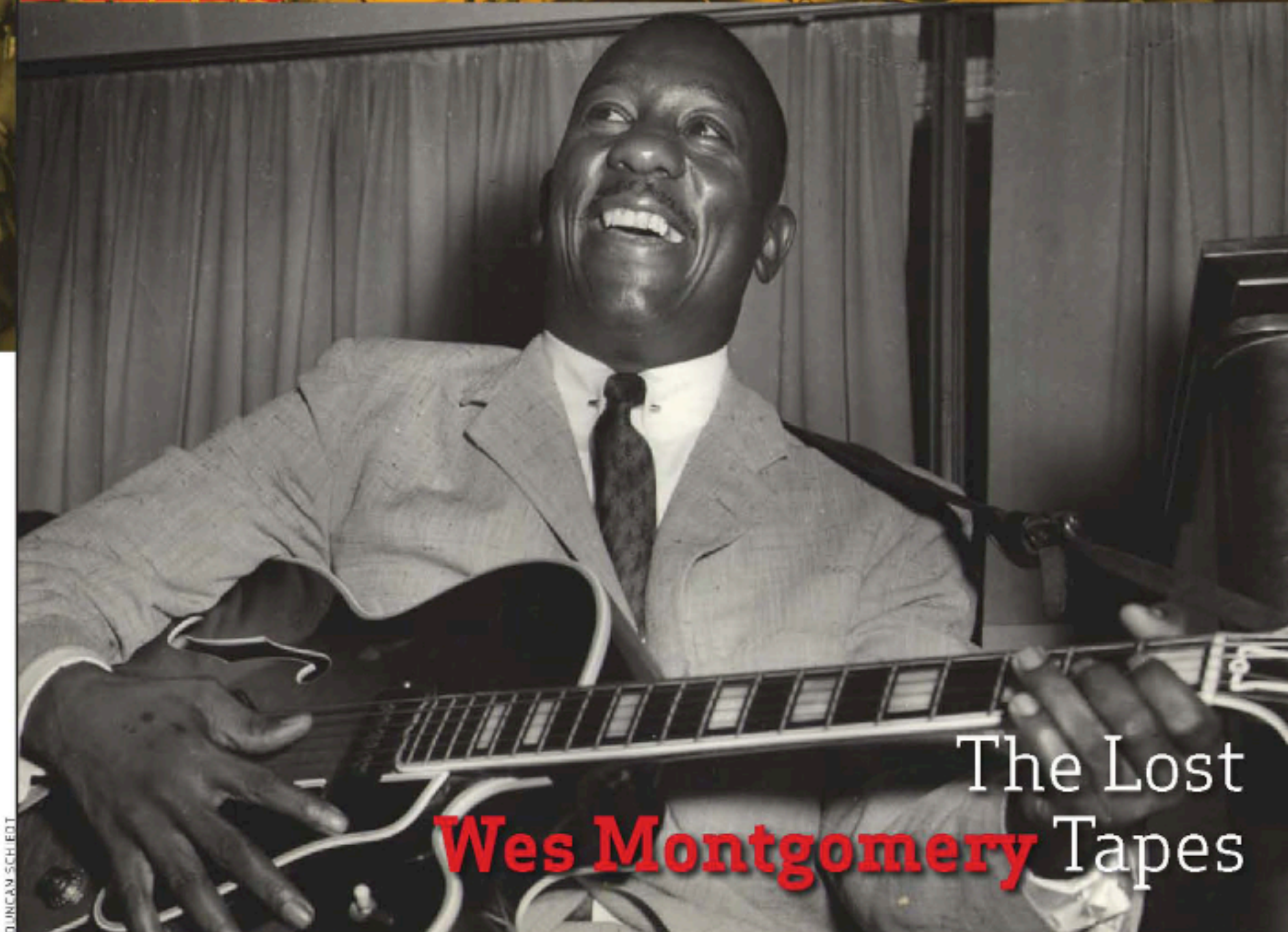
We wonder if the rather disinterested matrons at this mid-1950s outdoor event are aware the Montgomery Johnson Quintet includes the legendary Wes Montgomery and his brother Monk on bass.

ANN MONTGOMERY

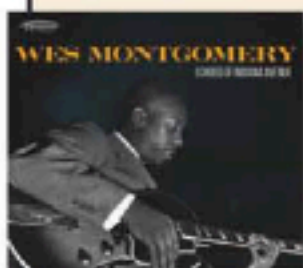








## The Lost Wes Montgomery Tapes



### WES MONTGOMERY'S METEORIC CAREER

spanned less than a decade before his untimely passing in 1968. Generations of guitarists have pored over his recorded legacy, seeking instruction, enjoyment, and inspiration. So when nine undiscovered tracks—five live and four studio recordings—surfaced, it was of historic import. This fact

was not lost on the folks at Resonance Records, who released them in a deluxe package containing an illustrated booklet with notes by Pat Martino, Dan Morgenstern, Dr. David Baker, Bill Milkowski, and others as *Wes Montgomery, Echoes of Indiana Avenue*.

"The tapes originated from a gentleman who tried auctioning them on eBay," says album producer Zev Feldman. "They were eventually acquired by [executive producer] Michael Cuscuna, and we got them from him."

Initially, nothing was known about the tracks—although it was assumed they may have been demos recorded shortly before Montgomery's first record deal in 1958. Between 2010 and 2011, Feldman and company made three trips to Montgomery's hometown of Indianapolis, Indiana, where they met with musicians, friends of the family, and music scholars to uncover the origins of the recordings.

"Dr. David N. Baker at Indiana State University was a major catalyst," explains Feldman. "For example, he remembered that Wes,

bassist Mingo Jones, and pianist Earl Van Riper performed regularly at a long-forgotten club called The Hub Bub—where the five live recordings were probably made—and he also made a strong case that Wes' brother Monk was the bassist on 'Straight No Chaser.'"

Eventually, nearly all of the musicians were identified, and after some deft audio restoration by engineer and co-executive producer George Klabin, the recordings sound surprisingly good.

"The tracks were recorded on analog tape at an unknown speed," says Klabin. "We received 16-bit digital transfers, and there were dropouts, missing highs, and tape hiss. In all cases, we attempted to preserve as much of the original sound as possible, while improving the equalization and compensating for the effects of aging tape. There was even the sound of a drill on two sections of 'Round Midnight.' Employing both proprietary and Ozone RX Advanced software—as well as lots of patience—we reduced the noise to almost zero."

All nine tunes bear witness to Montgomery's genius, and on most, the great man burns with an intensity and sense of abandon that would become somewhat less pronounced as his career progressed.

"This is the first full CD of new music from Wes Montgomery in more than 25 years," enthuses Feldman. "We may never be 100-percent certain of the true story behind these tapes, but they are almost certainly the earliest recordings of Montgomery as a leader, and, perhaps, the most swinging!" —BARRY CLEVELAND