

CHRISTIE'S

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CHRISTIE'S TO AUCTION MILES DAVIS'S BLUE LACQUER 'MOON AND STARS' TRUMPET

THE EXCEPTIONAL SALE, 29 OCTOBER



A 'Martin Committee' Trumpet in B Flat, Model T3460, by the Martin Co., circa 1980. Estimate: \$70,000-100,000.

New York – Christie's announces a trumpet designed and played by Miles Davis, one of the most significant jazz musicians of all time, will be offered in The Exceptional Sale on October 29 in New York. The 'Martin Committee' Trumpet in B Flat, model T3460, by the Martin Co., was commissioned circa 1980 and features a deep blue lacquer and gilt crescent moon and stars, designed according to Davis's specifications (estimate: \$70,000-100,000). The 'Moon and Stars' trumpet is both a fine piece of craftsmanship and marks a crucial moment in Davis's career, as he made his long-awaited return to music.

In a performing and recording career of almost fifty years Miles Davis produced many critically acclaimed albums and *Kind of Blue*, recorded in just two sessions in 1959, remains the best-selling jazz album of all time. Davis was called by some 'the Picasso of Jazz', for cultivating a distinctive sound while also remaining continuously hungry for new musical expression, picking up new audiences along the way.

Becky MacGuire, Sale Director, The Exceptional Sale, comments, *"We are over the moon to be offering this beautiful instrument made for jazz legend Miles Davis. Miles Davis's music has that same magical, transformative power to move us that a great masterpiece of painting or sculpture does. His iconic trumpet couldn't be more perfect for this 'best of the best' auction."*

The 'Moon and Stars' trumpet was made by the Martin Company, which was founded in Chicago in 1865 by the German instrument-maker, Johann Heinrich Martin. Davis was particularly fond of a model called the Committee. When the Martin Company was sold to a rival manufacturer in the 1960s — and the production of Committee trumpets officially stopped — they continued to be custom-made for Davis.

Davis had a famously restless creative mind and was a visual artist as well as a musician. The Committee horn being auctioned was one of a set of three conceived at his request, one was colored red, one blue and one black — each of them decorated with a gilt moon and stars, and with the word 'Miles' inscribed inside the bell. The red trumpet has remained in the star's family since his death in 1991, while the black one is buried at Davis's side in Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx near the gravesite of Duke Ellington, one of his idols. The blue 'Moon and Stars' trumpet offered was acquired by the present owner from the collection of musician George Benson.

ABOUT MILES DAVIS (1926-1991)

Born in St. Louis, Missouri, Davis convinced his parents to send him to the famous Juilliard School of Music in 1944. Once in New York he quickly connected with the jazz scene, joining the bebop band of Charlie 'Bird' Parker, one of his idols. He was a sideman for such artists as Sarah Vaughn, Billy Eckstine and Charles Mingus, while his own first album came out in 1951. In 1957 Miles had his first of many collaborations with John Coltrane ('Trane' to Miles), and in 1959 he recorded *Kind of Blue* – still the best-selling jazz album ever.

Kind of Blue and Davis's other late 50s albums for Columbia Records helped to develop a more mainstream audience for his cool jazz sound. Far from a strict jazz traditionalist, in the 1960s Miles Davis listened to and absorbed rock and soul like the Byrds, James Brown and Aretha Franklin. He loved Jimi Hendrix and even planned to record with him before Hendrix's tragic 1970 death. Davis's landmark *Bitches' Brew* album of 1970 grew his youth audience enormously, reaching double platinum in the U.S.

Davis continued to record, perform and innovate in the 1960s and early 1970s, absorbing influences from Stockhausen to soul. By 1975, however, a combination of exhaustion, personal demons and drug addiction forced him to take time out. He wouldn't pick up a musical instrument again in earnest until the early 1980s, which was when the blue-lacquer 'Moon and Stars' trumpet was created for him.

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Public Exhibitions:

October 16-19
Christie's Chicago
875 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 3810, Chicago

Auction:

The Exceptional Sale
October 29, 11am
Christie's New York

October 24-28
Christie's New York
20 Rockefeller Plaza

About Christie's

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Alongside regular sales online, Christie's has a global presence in 46 countries, with 10 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, Hong Kong, and Shanghai.

**Please note when quoting estimates above that other fees will apply in addition to the hammer price - see Section D of the Conditions of Sale at the back of the sale catalogue.*

**Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and are reported net of applicable fees.*

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