

## The Jazz Journal

Audio Video Club of Atlanta  
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Welcome back Jazz Fans!

I hope each of you are enjoying a fantastic summer! So far, this has been a great summer for Jazz. There have been a plethora of Jazz events all around Atlanta and the world, and many new releases as well.

In this issue, we review six discs that I think you'll want to explore. The first two are by trumpeters, one legendary, and the other, destined to be legendary. I'll review **Miles Davis'** 1965 disc "**E.S.P.**". This is a personal favorite of mine that is the first studio recording of the early Miles Davis Quintet and features a couple of relative newbies on the scene at that time; Herbie Hancock, and Wayne Shorter.

The second trumpeter is 27 year old **Christian Scott**. Christian is a wonderful musician and this disc; "**Yesterday You Said Tomorrow**" will definitely reveal the Miles Davis influence in his playing. Christian however is pushing the limit of staying between the lines on this disc. You'll hear lots of different influences, including producer Rudy Van Gelder's recording techniques. Music reviewers and Jazz critics from all over the industry are paying attention to Scott's latest work, released just a few months ago. If he continues to produce this new, edgy, yet highly refined and polished music, he'll become legendary...let's watch and see, for he's only 27!

I had the personal privilege of actually hiring Christian's Quartet many years ago to perform for a corporate function I hosted when he was only in high school. I recall being so taken with his maturity as a student and musician, we just had to have him for our event. It was a great night and all 500 guests sat mesmerized and walked away shaking their heads in disbelief at how such a young kid could play with such maturity.

The next two discs are contemporary works that I think you'll like as well. First up is the **Blue Note Records** disc "**Blue Note Plays Sting**" from the Blue Note Cover Series. This disc was released in 2005 and produced by Bob Belden. Belden is known for his wonderful arrangements or "re-arrangements" of popular music. Belden's gift is taking already great music and putting a Jazz flavor on it, *AND* getting some incredible artists to perform the songs. On this disc, Belden rounds up names such as: Dianne Reeves, Kurt Elling, John Scofield, and Freddie Hubbard. Be sure to check out the other Blue Note Cover Series discs on Amazon or elsewhere for lots of great music, redone.

**Jeff Lorber Fusion's** – "**Now is the Time**" is the second contemporary disc we review this month. It is a 2010 release and represents the "long awaited" return of the Jeff Lorber Fusion (JLF) band. The bad news: The album only moderately has the hard-ass, cooking with gas vibe of the early JLF music.

The good news...it's still a really good disc! JLF introduces new musicians, reunites with established musicians, and continues to amaze with a fresh approach to their music, both new and old.

The last two discs reviewed feature great vocalists. The first is **Michael Bublé's** 2007 disc– "**Call Me Irresponsible**" and the second is another real gem, **Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong** - "**Ella and Louis**".

Bublé's "Irresponsible" disc is the selection of the month as it provides a great combination of great music, performed excellently, with great standard audio quality. This is not his most recent release, but it is, in my opinion, one of his BEST releases. Michael Bublé covers some of the most well-known popular vocal tunes ever written on this disc, and does so with an outstanding degree of artistry.

Lastly, we get to the famous "Ella and Louis" disc. With the help of Chuck Bruce and Dennis Juraneck, I not only review this great disc musically, but I was able to compare three versions of it: a reissued Speaker's Corner vinyl version, the standard Verve Music re-mastered CD, and a 24/96 bit DVD-Audio disc downloaded from HD-Tracks (thanks again Dennis!). First of all, this is just great, timeless music that you should really enjoy and add to your collection, in any format. The recording quality is absolutely fabulous on all three and was produced originally by Norman Granz. Ella's and Louis' voices are so distinct in places, you'll hear every detail of their breath, and even their lips parting between words...just fantastic audio!

The Speaker's Corner vinyl, played on Chuck's VPI rig with Benz cartridge, as you might anticipate, provided overall the most neutral, delicate, and transparent presentation of the three sources. As with any vinyl, the slight presence of surface noise was the only detractor. The Verve re-mastered CD sounded great, and was played on a Sony ES CD/DVD/Super-Audio CD player. The standard CD presented with a slightly shallower soundstage, less delicacy and transparency, and with a tiny bit of "edge" or "bite" to the vocals and to Louis' muted trumpet compared to the vinyl...BUT STILL VERY NICE. The DVD-Audio disc in 24/96 revealed a deeper soundstage and greater transparency than the standard CD, and the "edge" on the voices and trumpet all but disappeared. The DVD-Audio disc still did not quite capture the finesse of Analog playback, but pretty close. All three versions are great so enjoy the music either way!

Remember, send me an email with your feedback about THE JAZZ JOURNAL.

THANKS!



Don

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**Miles Davis: E.S.P**

Irving Townsend: Producer

Columbia Records. Originally Released: 1965 (1998 reissued)

Recording Engineer: UNKNOWN

**Audio Quality/Music: 3.0/4.5**

Genre: Mainstream Jazz/ Be-Bop/ Swing

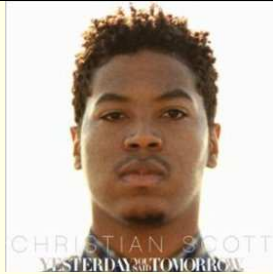
I was recently asked by an A-VCOA member recently, "Can you recommend a few good Miles Davis albums for me?" That is a tough question. Miles Davis' discography numbers in the hundreds and his style of play is extremely broad throughout his life; from eloquent ballads, to edgy avant-garde, to R&B/Funk. Miles has played it all. However, when thinking of a good recommendation, a personal favorite is his 1965 disc "E.S.P.". This disc is loaded with Jazz phenoms of his, at the time "new" quintet, consisting of Wayne Shorter on Tenor Saxophone, Herbie Hancock, piano; Ron Carter, Bass; and Tony Williams on Drums. That represents a true All-Star line up, although this was early in most of their careers. Wayne Shorter was the oldest member of the group at age 31 and Drummer Tony Williams was only 19.

E.S.P. is a unique disc in that it was a 'follow-up' so to speak to the landmark disc "Kind Of Blue". This disc was the first new material Davis released for a small group (trio, quartet, or quintet) since K.O.B. E.S.P. was also the first studio recording for this 'new' quintet. I find this particular disc extremely enjoyable and one of the most consistent performances of his catalog. The group performed what was considered forward-thinking music at that time, that now, although still great work, sounds much like it could have been written this year. That is a compliment, not a knock...the music is timeless!

Throughout the disc, Miles' playing is crisp, neat, and flawless. Hancock on piano explores new territory and sounds on every track. Wayne Shorter's sax is controlled, but not restrained, Ron Carter's bass is ever-present, but never gets too overbearing. Although recording quality is good, it's not superb, but the quality of the music is so enjoyable, you'll not notice it.

**Listen to Audio Samples at Amazon.com:**

[http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00138CUT2/ref=s9\\_simh\\_gw\\_p340\\_i1?pf\\_rd\\_m=ATVPDKIKX0DER&pf\\_rd\\_s=center-2&pf\\_rd\\_r=02H4KHCRWA85YA7N0GYY&pf\\_rd\\_t=101&pf\\_rd\\_p=40938631&pf\\_rd\\_i=507846](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00138CUT2/ref=s9_simh_gw_p340_i1?pf_rd_m=ATVPDKIKX0DER&pf_rd_s=center-2&pf_rd_r=02H4KHCRWA85YA7N0GYY&pf_rd_t=101&pf_rd_p=40938631&pf_rd_i=507846)



**Christian Scott: Yesterday You Said Tomorrow**

Chris Dunn and Christian Scott: Producers

Concord Music Group: Released: 2010

Recorded, Mixed, Mastered: Rudy Van Gelder

**Audio Quality/Music: 3.0/4.0**

Genre: Mainstream Jazz/Contemporary Jazz

"Miles Jr." could easily be a stage name for Christian Scott on his latest disc, "Yesterday You Said Tomorrow". On this disc, Christian Scott explores new territory in Jazz and incorporates his social consciousness into the work, much like the Miles Davis groups of the 60's and later.

This recent disc is far and away, one of the most unique Jazz releases musically of the year, and possibly in the last few years. Scott really mixes up things here for a truly engaging body of work. The disc opener, "K.K.P.D." is an angry statement about his experiences growing up in the deep south, New Orleans, Louisiana, and his and others profiling episodes with the N.O.P.D...referred to here as the "K.K.P.D" (Klu Klux Klan Police Department). Scott though (with Gelder's influence most likely), then introduces on the next track, "The Eraser", purposeful distortion layered into a wonderful ballad, with a nice little groove underneath. You initially want to check the disc for some defect, but then you realize, that noise is supposed to be there...I hope!

The rest of the disc is absolutely outstanding with a virtually unknown, yet outstanding cast of band-mates. It offers a variety of emotions, including more social statements with tunes like "Jenacide" and "Angola, LA and the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment". The remaining tracks include more interesting harmonics and sound effects interjected into the songs, keeping you in a "what's next" frame of mind. Matthew Sanders' electric guitar appears throughout with a sound that leans to Al DiMeola, Alan Holdsworth, or perhaps Robben Ford. The guitar solos at the end of track 9, as well as the last track are phenomenally recorded and presented in the soundstage.

The Borders Books exclusive copy of the disc includes a five track bonus disc that is a tribute to Freddie Hubbard, the legendary trumpeter who died just a few years ago. This disc in many ways is as good as or better than the title disc, albeit, covering prior work of a Jazz Legend. On the disc Scott and his band perform his variations of a few legendary tunes like "Red Clay" written by Hubbard. Hoagy Carmichael and Johnny Mercers' "Skylark", and Herbie Hancock's "Eye of the Hurricane" are also featured. The Bonus Disc alone is worth the price of admission...check it out.

**Listen to Audio Samples at Amazon.com:**

[http://www.amazon.com/Yesterday-You-Said-Tomorrow/dp/B003EHVK1Y/ref=sr\\_shvl\\_album\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1276817682&sr=301-1](http://www.amazon.com/Yesterday-You-Said-Tomorrow/dp/B003EHVK1Y/ref=sr_shvl_album_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1276817682&sr=301-1)



**Various Blue Artists: *Blue Note Plays Sting***

Compilation Produced By: Bob Belden

Mastered By: Mark Wilder and Maria Triana

Blue Note Records: Released 2005

**Audio Quality/Music: 4.0/3.5**

Genre: Contemporary Jazz

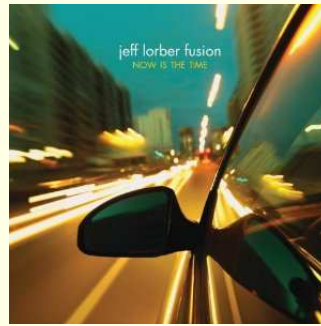
The "Blue Note Cover Series" of discs is an interesting group of discs produced beginning around the early 2000's. The Blue Note label gathered a wide array of their artists and had them explore new interpretations of classic tunes by various artists of the Jazz, R&B, and Pop world including The Beatles, Stevie Wonder, Sting, George Gershwin, Frank Sinatra, Ray Charles and others. This disc features several tracks previously released by arranger Bob Belden on his disc "Straight To My Heart; The Music of Sting", and 4 others. The featured artist list is outstanding: Cassandra Wilson, Dianne Reeves, Phil Perry, Kurt Elling, Tim Hagans, Freddie Hubbard, Kirk Whalum, John Scofield, Bob Belden, Bobby Watson, Mark Ledford, Flavio Boltro, Rick Margitza, and Jimi Tunnell.

(I had the pleasure of working with Mark Ledford's wife while on assignment in California. Mark died of a heart attack at an early age, so hearing him here is a real treat). Ledford's silky voice and instrumentalism is well known but many don't recognize his name, but he's backed up and been featured with a wide range of artists, most notably, Pat Metheny.

The tunes selected for this disc feature both Sting solo work and those of The Police. If you are a Sting or Police fan, this is an obvious addition to round out the collection. The Belden arrangements are fantastic, as well as the other non-Belden arranged tracks. You'll be treated to lots of dynamic music often with multiple layers to it. In some tracks, there are three or more such layers, making for extremely engaging listening. While these discs were not critically acclaimed, I find this one in particular, to be VERY enjoyable however. Each track features a star artist, often mated with other equally notable musicians. Of particular note would be Kurt Elling's live-session take on "Oh My God", and Freddie Hubbard's "Fragile". Part of what makes the disc unique are the combinations of artists that may have not typically played together. The musicians do get the opportunity to stretch a bit, but not to their limits, resulting in a somewhat controlled feel to the music, but still offering a unique approach to the material. Definitely worth listening to...enjoy!

**Listen to Audio Samples at Amazon.com:**

[http://www.amazon.com/Blue-Note-Plays-Sting/dp/B0006ULVKC/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&s=music&qid=1276970326&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.com/Blue-Note-Plays-Sting/dp/B0006ULVKC/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=music&qid=1276970326&sr=1-1)



**Jeff Lorber Fusion: *Now Is The Time***

Jeff Lorber, Jimmy Haslip, and Bobby Colomby, Producers.

HEADS UP Records: Released 2010

**Audio Quality/Music: 4.0/4.0**

Genre: Contemporary Jazz / Modern Fusion

The 'long-awaited' new release by Jeff Lorber is a bit of something old, dressed up into something new. It is familiar, as well as new and interesting. Anyone that likes the early Jeff Lorber Fusion discs such as "Wizard Island", "Soft Space", and "Water Sign", WILL like this disc, BUT it is NOT the hard hitting, fusion of the old Jeff Lorber Fusion band. This disc takes a bit 'smoother' road...not quite all the way to the dreaded "Smooth Jazz" sound, but almost. Lorber takes his previous material and puts a fresh coat of soulful paint on it. It's a little like customizing a classic 50's, 60's, or 70's muscle car...some will find it sacrilegious, others will gaze in admiration and enjoy the new look. "Now is The Time" will be the same for JLF die-hards. For me, I'm leaning to the admiring the new look side of things.

The musician line-up is fusion-loaded featuring: Randy Brecker, Jimmy Haslip (Yellowjackets), Paul Jackson, Jr., Dave Weckl, Vinnie Colaiuta, and Irene B. among others.

The opening track "Rain Dance/Wanna Fly" will have you reminiscing about the early JLF sound, but unveiling a new vocalist; Irene B. She's got a great silky, soulful voice that just kind of glides along over the funky groove. She appears again on three other tracks including "Water Sign".

Track 5, "Mysterious Traveler" finally connects with the JLF of old, with a funk-laden bass groove, and excellent improvisation on keyboards and Eric Marienthal's Soprano Sax. Track 7, "Black Ice" offers more of the early JLF driving fusion sound. The rest of the disc is full of familiar tunes, dressed in the new JLF sound. "Water Sign" pulls off both the hard-hitting JLF of old, with the new Irene B.'s voice adding lyrics where there were none before!!

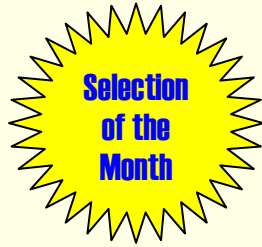
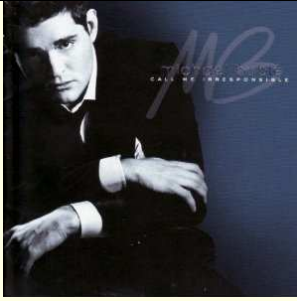
The recording quality is very good as well. The mostly electronic instrumentation is not captured with any harshness. There is a bit of compression in the top end and a bit of boost in the lower frequencies, but not too overdone.

Pop this disc in and enjoy!

**Listen to Audio Samples at Amazon.com:**

[http://www.amazon.com/Now-Time-Jeff-Lorber-Fusion/dp/B003HE2AWC/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&s=music&qid=1276972292&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.com/Now-Time-Jeff-Lorber-Fusion/dp/B003HE2AWC/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=music&qid=1276972292&sr=1-1)





**Michael Bublé: *Call Me Irresponsible***

David Foster, Humberto Gatica: Producers  
 Reprise Records: Released December 2007  
**Audio Quality/Music: 4.5/4.5**  
 Genre: Vocal Jazz / Contemporary Pop-Jazz

Let David Foster touch it, and it turns out gold!

This 2007 release by Bublé is a great piece of music. Bublé does covers of some of the most recognizable vocal tunes from legendary Pop, Jazz, Country-Western, and R & B singers and writers of all time. Bublé covers Leonard Cohen, Gamble and Huff, and Eric Clapton. Many of the tunes were standards and favorites of the likes of Sinatra and Nat King Cole and Bublé puts his touch on these for a fresh sound. For example, Track 5 - "I'm Coming Home Baby" is an eclectic remix with R&B Vocal group Boyz II Men.

On the same disc you get his cover of tunes like "Me and Mrs. Jones" first recorded by the Soul legend, Billy Paul in the early 70's, and "I've Got the World on a String" a 1930's tune recorded in the 50's by Frank Sinatra. Then there is "Always on My Mind", a Country-Western tune originally recorded by Brenda Lee. There is a wide-ranging scope of music represented here, but Foster and Bublé somehow pull the various genres together so that it sounds like all the tunes were meant to be recorded this way. "That's Life" is the crescendo of the disc offering a BIG swinging band, BOLD Gospel Choir, and powerful vocals by Bublé...a fantastic tune redone fantastically!

The orchestration throughout the disc is nicely intertwined with a swinging rhythm section that has you tapping your foot and bobbing your head, while listening to the orchestration at the same time.

Most importantly, we can't forget about Bublé's crooning vocal style. He does a fine job of not destroying the integrity of some fine lyrics and original arrangements, all while giving each tune a modern flair. His voice in the recording is presented beautifully throughout. In one or two places, it seemed a bit buried in the mix, but for the most part, he's front and center and delicately mic'ed.

The duet "Wonderful Tonight" with Ivan Lins is one of the nicest versions of the tunes I've heard. "Everything" follows "Wonderful Tonight" and kicks off a more contemporary pop sound without the full orchestra.

**Listen to Audio Samples at Amazon.com:**

[http://www.amazon.com/Call-Irresponsible-Spec-Michael-Buble/dp/B000W02TDE/ref=sr\\_1\\_2?ie=UTF8&s=music&qid=1276975046&sr=1-2](http://www.amazon.com/Call-Irresponsible-Spec-Michael-Buble/dp/B000W02TDE/ref=sr_1_2?ie=UTF8&s=music&qid=1276975046&sr=1-2)



**Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong: *Ella and Louis***

Original Producer: Norman Granz  
 Original Release: Verve Records, Released 1956  
 HD- Tracks (DVD-Audio) Download  
**Audio Quality/Music: 4.5/4.5**  
 Genre: Be-Bop / Vocal Jazz

This is another one of those 'must have' discs for any Jazz fan. Louis Armstrong is considered to be one of the most prolific Jazz musicians of all time, and Ella Fitzgerald is considered another. They were teamed-up in 1956 with a quartet of Oscar Peterson piano; Herb Ellis, guitar; Buddy Rich, drums; and Ray Brown on Bass to record a timeless collection of Jazz standards.

This HD-Tracks downloaded DVD-Audio version revealed exquisite details of the recording. The vocals are phenomenally recorded and presented. The DVD-Audio version generally presented with a greater sense of inner detail, space, and clarity over the standard Verve re-mastered CD. Especially notable are the already impeccable vocals by both Armstrong and Ella. In the words of Sting, 'every breath you take', at times, every breath Louis or Ella takes is revealed. Louis takes subtle but deep breaths while singing and while playing the trumpet and you will, for a moment feel he's right there. You literally can hear him breathing. The same goes for Ella's silky voice. The 24/96 bit DVD-Audio reproduced her voice without a hint of grit or shrill, and her voice enters and fills the room beautifully. The quartet additionally fills in the space around Louis and Ella and never interferes with either of them, but provides a nice underlayment for Louis and Ella's voices and trumpet solo's.

The disc contains absolutely timeless Jazz standards such as "Can't We Be Friends", "Moonlight in Vermont", "They Can't Take That Away from Me", "Stars Fell on Alabama", "Cheek to Cheek" and "April in Paris", and a few others. All of the tunes are performed flawlessly and Louis and Ella are in brilliant musical form throughout. You will not hear some of the raucous scating of some of Armstrong's other recordings, but instead, very refined improvisational lyrics along with the wonderfully silky vocals of Ella.

Louis plays his muted trumpet on most of the tracks, and does a fine job of not overpowering the delicate vocals of Ella.

The Standard CD version is also well-engineered and sounds fantastic as well. It doesn't offer quite the inner detail as the DVD Audio, but is nicely done and you would not be disappointed.

**Audio Samples and disc information:**

**CD available at Amazon.Com:**

<http://www.elusivedisc.com/prodinfo.asp?number=EUROS4003>

**Speakers Corner Vinyl at elusiveDisc:**

<http://www.elusivedisc.com/prodinfo.asp?number=EUROS4003>

**Hi-Rez Downloads at:**

<https://www.hdtracks.com/>

