



Wynton Kelly – Kelly Blue
Riverside Original Recording Series

At first thought, **Wynton Kelly** who was an accomplished Hard-Bop pianist and renowned instrumentalist didn't seem the logical choice to replace either **Bill Evans** or **Red Garland** as a member of **The Miles Davis Quintet** and **Sextet**. But, he possessed an artistic maturity in his playing and succinct style that appealed to Davis enough for the legendary trumpet virtuoso to hire him in 1959. **Kelly Blue** (Riverside Contemporary Series 12-298) is the subject of this discussion and was released the same year. It was the third album Kelly recorded as a leader following his 1953 debut, **New Faces, New Sounds** (Blue Note BLP 5025) and **Wynton Kelly Quartet** (RLP 12-254), his 1958 debut on Riverside. My copy used for this report is the 1975 Japanese Stereo reissue (Riverside – SMJ-6114) by **Victor Musical Industries, Inc.** Wynton's bandmates on this album are the firm bass of **Paul Chambers** and **Jimmy Cobb**, who is one of the most exciting and original drummers in jazz. Together, these three men would anchor one of Miles Davis' greatest groups. They were also featured on **Kind of Blue** (Columbia CL 1355/CS 8163) and would ultimately become a remarkable trio themselves appearing in many of the top jazz clubs in the United States. The front line consists of **Nat Adderley** on cornet; **Bobby Jaspar** on flute and tenor saxophonist **Benny Golson** completes the sextet.

The album opens with the first of three compositions by the pianist, **Kelly Blue**, the title tune is a midtempo blues which begins with a three-instrument interchange between Jaspar, Chambers, and Cobb. The front-line joins in the discussion as the melody unfolds. Kelly opens the soloing swinging at a bluesy pace that is suitably matched to the proficiency of Chambers' harmonic bass and Cobb's perfect timekeeping on the drums. Jaspar takes over for the second

solo, exhibiting some interesting twists and turns on each chorus. Nat raises the temperature slightly with an impressive performance emphasizing the young cornetist was as resourceful a soloist as he was an accompanist. The always entertaining Golson has the final say and delivers a gorgeous closing statement as smooth as a sled on new snow leading to the theme's reprise and coda.

Softly, As In a Morning Sunrise, written by Sigmund Romberg and Oscar Hammerstein II is one of the most recorded songs in jazz and comes from the 1928 operetta, **The New Moon**. Originally an instrumental tango with dancing providing the musical backing, the lyrics depict a darker tone of desire for a lost love, regret and remorse. The first of four trio performances on the album, Wynton and company introduce the song gradually on the theme. Kelly's pianistic distinctiveness emerges with a playful confidence in a very stylish, rhapsodic performance on the lead solo, emphasizing the steady and impressive maturing of his musical form. Chambers' closing solo is so relaxing, it's like slipping into something comfortable after a long day strongly underlined by Kelly and Cobb.

On Green Dolphin Street by Bronislaw Kaper and Ned Washington first appeared in the 1947 film, **Green Dolphin Street**. But the song is actually based on the 1944 novel by English author Elizabeth Goudge and is another standard from The Great American Songbook that's been recorded profusely. The trio gives this old favorite an uptempo sprucing up with a lively rendition that indulges in some delicious fun on the melody led by Wynton's capable hands and feet. He's also terrifically agile on the only solo, generating considerable heat with full-voiced choruses that swing relentlessly. Paul and Jimmy also provide a watertight foundation showcasing the skillful musicianship of the trio into the finale. The second side starts with the 1932 jazz and pop standard, **Willow Weep For Me** by Ann Ronell who composed the music and lyrics. Chambers introduces the song leisurely to set the mood, Kelly and Cobb add their instruments for a very friendly and pleasant theme statement at a moderate climate. Wynton takes the first solo, presenting a very pretty interpretation that is soft in texture. Chambers also contributes a sensuous solo on the closing statement with a tender refinement that's rhythmically mesmerizing.

Keep It Moving, the second original by Kelly is an uptempo blowing session that swings out the gate, bringing back Adderley, Jaspar, and Golson for their second and final appearance on the album. Wynton kicks off the solos with

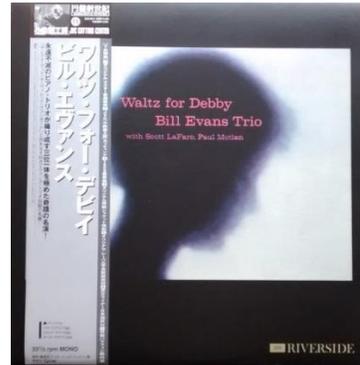


a vigorous presentation illustrating the formidable technique and sophistication in his playing that led Miles Davis to hire him. Golson gives a radiant performance next, then Adderley turns in an engagingly provocative, captivating reading demonstrating his immaculate intonation. Jaspas suggests a genuinely improvisatory spirit at work on the next reading, emphasizing that point with a straight-ahead groove. Chambers takes center stage last with an excellent example of his abilities as a disciplined improviser on the closer preceding the theme's return. The finale is Kelly's **Old Clothes** which gets underway with an enthusiastic romp of joyous anticipation during the melody offering a mood of joyful anticipation as it unfolds. Wynton crafts a lively opening statement which moves gracefully through each verse. Chambers digs in masterfully on the next interpretation that's a testament to his mastery on the bass. Cobb illustrates an excellent grasp of dynamics, tonal sophistication with a boppish edge that stands out prominently.

Wynton Kelly was both a talented composer and a stellar musician and the level of good spirits demonstrated by him and his colleagues on this album of standards and original works are especially endearing. **Kelly Blue** is an album, characterized by the pianist's contagious enthusiasm and some of his best playing on the record. The music is an engaging set that is one I'm sure you'll enjoy and well worth adding to your LP library whether you're a fan of his, or piano jazz!

On Green Dolphin Street, Willow Weep For Me – Source: JazzStandards.com

Softly, As In a Morning Sunrise, The New Moon, Green Dolphin Street – Source: Wikipedia.org



The Bill Evans Trio – Waltz For Debby
Riverside – DIW Records

By 1961, pianist **Bill Evans** not only had one of the best trios in the United States, but one of the best trios in all of jazz. Bassist **Scott LaFaro** who would replace Sam Jones and **Paul Motion** is on drums. Together, these three men recorded four incredible albums for Riverside Records. **Portrait in Jazz** (RLP 12-315/RLP 1162) in 1960, **Explorations** (RLP 351/RLP 9351) and the final two albums recorded in performance at **The Village Vanguard**, on June 25, 1961. **Sunday at The Village Vanguard** (RLP-376/RLP 9376) and the subject of this discussion, **Waltz For Debby** (RLP 399), released the same year. Both LP's became a standard of excellence for all other piano/bass/drum records which would follow, and my copy used for this report is the 2000 **DIW Records** Mono audiophile (DIW-9011 – RLP-399) reissue. This is the third Japanese pressing of **Waltz For Debby**, but the first Mono reissue by Victor Entertainment, Inc. The previous two albums which came out in 1975 (SMJ-6118) and 1984 (VIJ-113) are both Stereo reissues by Victor Musical Industries, Inc.

The opening track, **My Foolish Heart** was written in 1949 by Ned Washington and Victor Young! This timeless evergreen, which ultimately became a well-recorded jazz standard, was featured on the silver screen in the film dramatization, the same year. The introduction is a suspenseful and ingeniously planned affair where the trio interacts beautifully, so that no one voice dominates or falls subordinate to the others. Evans is ideally suited to this serene standard as the song's only soloist because he could create compelling improvisations in any context. Here, he crafts a stylishly thoughtful reading that weaves sinuously through each chorus and is breathtakingly beautiful. Both LaFaro and Motion compliment the pianist with a subtle



expression of beauty in their accompaniment as intimate as any version previously presented.

The lone original on the album by Bill Evans is the title tune, **Waltz For Debby** is named for the pianist's niece and one of two selections heard here which made their first appearance on the 1956 Riverside album, **New Jazz Conceptions** (RLP 12-223). The introduction is established by Bill and Scott, a mild two instrument dialogue which is elaborately conceived and confidently dispatched, evolving into a midtempo melody statement when Paul joins the conversation. Evans' opening solo is a stunning, vibrant tour de force with a surging, straight-ahead line. LaFaro takes over next, with an enthusiastic performance on the closing statement that is impossible to listen to and not tap your foot to the contagious beat. Motion's exciting groundwork on the drums maintains the crackling groove for his colleagues.

Detour Ahead by bassist and violinist, John Frigo, jazz guitarist Herb Ellis and jazz pianist Lou Carter is a song which has not lost its charm by being done once too often. This jazz standard was written in 1947 after all three musicians left **The Tommy Dorsey Orchestra** to form a trio, **The Soft Winds**. On the opening solo, Evans' opening solo is a loving touch of splendor for an affectionate performance with skillfully paced cues of rich intonation. LaFaro delivers the closing presentation with an intimately expressive performance that communicates the thoughtful, heartfelt elegance and attractive style of his playing.

My Romance by Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart, the second tune from **New Jazz Conceptions** is given an uptempo treatment and opens the second side. It was written for the 1935 Broadway musical, **Jumbo** by Impresario and lyricist, Billy Rose and would also be featured in the 1962 musical film, **Billy Rose's Jumbo**. This is a favorite which opens with a marvelous solo introduction by Evans, prior to LaFaro and Motion joining him for a mix of midtempo flames on the opening melody that is especially effective. Bill's opening statement emphasizes his remarkable technique and facility for complex melodic invention perfectly. Scott comes up with some exquisite ideas on the closing presentation driven by the pulsating interplay and high level of energy of Evans and Motion.

The first few notes of **Some Other Time** by Leonard Bernstein with lyrics by Betty Comden and Adolph Green are reminiscent of Bill Evans' and Paul Chambers' introduction to **Flamenco Sketches** by Miles Davis two

years earlier on **Kind of Blue** (Columbia CL 1355/CS 8163). The song itself was written in 1944 and is featured in the MGM musical, **On The Town**. Evans originally planned to record it on his 1958 Riverside album, **Everybody Digs Bill Evans** (RLP 12-291/RLP 1129), but instead used another Bernstein-Comden-Green composition, **Lucky To Be Me** which is also heard in the MGM film. Evans' interpretation displays a rare tenderness and tranquility that is stunning. LaFaro and Motion provide the sincere supplement which reveals each layer of this beautiful song on each chorus, culminating into a tender climax that receives a warm response from the Village Vanguard audience.

The finale pays homage to Evans' old boss Miles Davis with a scintillating uptempo rendition of **Milestones**. The song opens with a medium fast introduction by the trio that shifts into uptempo on the melody. Evans makes a brief comment on the first solo with efficiency that is stimulated by the sparkling reinforcement of the rhythm section. The highlight though is the fireworks by LaFaro on each verse of the final statement with a voracious reading that rocks with limitless vitality into a fantastic finale. **Scott LaFaro** was a gifted hard-bop bassist who played with authority and tenderness. He also added a unique dimension of artistic delicacy, maturity and meticulousness to the four albums he appeared as a member of **The Bill Evans Trio**. LaFaro was considered one of the best bassists in jazz and was slated to do greater things in the years ahead. Sadly, that wouldn't be the case because just ten days after this recording was made, he would die in an automobile accident which devastated Evans personally and the loss to jazz itself was incalculable.

The six selections on **Waltz For Debby** were splendidly recorded originally by **Dave Jones** and the remastering by **JVC Mastering Center** for this reissue is extraordinary. Like its companion, **Sunday at The Village Vanguard**, this LP is a riveting, evocative and impressive live album of creative jazz music by **The Bill Evans Trio**. It offers a memorable treat for anyone who hears it and is strongly recommended to occupy a space in your jazz library! Both albums are currently in print as part of the four-record audiophile box set, **The Complete Village Vanguard Recordings, 1961 on Fantasy Jazz** (AFAN 36005) from **Concord Music Group** that was released in 2014!

My Foolish Heart, My Romance, Detour Ahead, Some Other Time – Source: JazzStandards.com



Jumbo, Billy Rose's Jumbo, On The Town, Lucky To Be Me, The Soft Winds – Source: Wikipedia.org

aggressive tone ahead of the theme's return and brisk finale.



Joe Henderson – In 'N Out
Blue Note - Pathé Marconi-EMI

Punjab, another Henderson original slows the pace to medium tempo to end the first side. The quintet opens the song with a bluesy, lyrical interpretation precedes the first of two readings by the saxophonist. The lead solo by Joe is an ear pleaser that flows at a low flame with rhythmic verve. Kenny continues the next interpretation with emotional vitality which suits his timbre very well on each beautifully constructed chorus. McCoy steps in next to deliver the next performance with Richard and Elvin answering every phrase while backing him softly through each verse. Joe explores some intriguing ideas on the final statement, before turning it over to the ensemble who end the song the way it began, in a laid-back fashion. **Serenity**, Joe's final contribution opens the second side at midtempo with the quintet sustaining a mellowness of tone on the melody while reflecting a strong bop influence. Dorham achieves a fully relaxed feeling on the lead solo with a tone that is full and firm. Henderson shapes the next reading with carefully spaced phrases that fits the flavor of his tune perfectly. Tyner gives a marvelously warm performance which communicates his message efficiently and Davis' first solo on the album is an articulate statement that swings straight-ahead back to the theme and climax.

The subject of this review from the library is by tenor saxophonist **Joe Henderson** who I first heard live at **The 1992 Atlanta Jazz Festival**. There was a definite electricity in the air that night I saw his quartet. His performance was brilliant and a stellar highlight of the AJF, blowing everyone away in attendance. His third album for Blue Note, **In 'N Out** (BST 84166) was released in 1964 and finds him in the company of an all-star quartet, **Kenny Dorham** on trumpet; **McCoy Tyner** on piano; **Richard Davis** on bass and **Elvin Jones** on drums. My copy used in this report is the 1983 French Stereo pressing by **Pathé Marconi - EMI** which shares the original catalog number. The French DMM (Direct Metal Mastering) Stereo reissue would be released four years later in 1987. The title tune, the first of three compositions by Henderson leads off the album swinging from the start with a cohesive harmony and some of the tightest ensemble playing heard during the melody. Joe rips into the opening solo with an exhilarating interpretation wailing with an attack of skillful inventiveness. McCoy delivers a ferocious excitement on the next reading with a stylistic maturity which makes an invigorating musical statement. Kenny is up next, illustrating why he was one of the most individual and stimulating trumpeters in jazz with a refreshingly vigorous performance marked by heated passion. Joe returns, cooking with conviction on a short sermon of stunning virtuosity that punctuates the final reading with a strong,

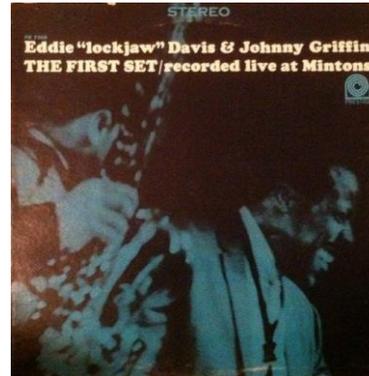
Kenny Dorham tells a **Short Story** on the first of two originals by the trumpeter, it opens with three sequential riffs by Davis, Jones and Tyner on the introduction. Kenny is up first with a clean-lined opening statement that's characterized by the feeling of well-being and contentment on each verse. Joe makes the next performance come alive with cheerfulness and good spirits on each verse. McCoy excels on the next performance delivering an energetic improvisation to a satisfying result, and Elvin is amazing in an exchange with both horns on the final solo before the close. For the finale, the quintet closes with a midtempo trip to **Brown's Town** with Henderson heard only on the opening and closing melody, Dorham, Tyner and Davis the featured soloists. Kenny delivers a provocative portrait on the opening statement with warm, lyrical, stirring phrases that are improvised superbly. Tyner takes the next turn, possessing a sweet, slightly fragile tone substantiating the interplay between both hands, the beauty of his sound and a grand delivery into a tender culmination. Richard sparkles on the final reading with a beautifully, intricate and subtle performance that evokes an almost ballad-like mood, flowing back into the ensemble's reflectively tender closing chorus with loving ease.



Joe Henderson recorded four other albums as a leader for Blue Note between 1963 and 1968, **Page One** (BLP 4140/BST 84140); **Our Thing** (BLP 4152/BST 84152); **Inner Urge** (BLP 4189/BST 84189) and **Mode For Joe** (BLP 4227/BST 84227). He also appeared as a sideman on many of the landmark LP's for the label including **Unity** by **Larry Young** (BLP 4121/BST 84121); **Una Mas** by **Kenny Dorham** (BLP 4127/BST 84127); **Little Johnny C** by **Johnny Coles** (BLP 4144/BST 84144); **Black Fire** by **Andrew Hill** (BLP 4151/BST 84151); **Idle Moments** by **Grant Green** (BLP 4154/BST 84154); **The Sidewinder** by **Lee Morgan** (BLP 4157/BST 84157); **Point of Departure** by **Andrew Hill** (BLP 4167/BST 84167); **Song For My Father** by **The Horace Silver Quintet** (BLP 4185/BST 84185); **Wahoo** by **Duke Pearson** (BLP 4191/BST 84191); **Blue Spirits** by **Freddie Hubbard** (BLP 4196/BST 84196); **Basra** by **Pete La Roca** (BLP 4205/BST 84205); **The Cape Verdean Blues** by **The Horace Silver Quintet** (BLP 4220/BST 84220) and **The Prisoner** by **Herbie Hancock** (BST 84321). His career would last over forty years recording for other labels including Milestone, Elektra Musician, Fantasy, CTI Records, Red Records and Verve Records. He returned to Blue Note in 1985 to perform during a special concert marking the rebirth of Blue Note Records, **One Night With Blue Note Preserved** (BTDK 85117) and a two-volume LP in 1986, **The State of The Tenor-Live at The Village Vanguard** (BT-85123/BT-85126), but one of his biggest hits would be made six-years later for Verve Records in 1992, **Lush Life: The Music of Billy Strayhorn** (314 511 779-2).

Joe was a consummate composer and one of the most respected musicians in jazz, performing in concerts and festivals around the world during the nineties. I was lucky enough to see him live twice, the second time was 1994 in performance at **Spivey Hall**. After a long battle with emphysema, Joe Henderson passed away from heart failure on June 30, 2001. In **'N Out** is among the better remastered albums done by **Pathé Marconi-EMI** from the original Stereo tapes of **Rudy Van Gelder**. The sound is impressive throughout the album with a crystal-clear soundstage for each of the instruments. Kenny, McCoy and Richard are heard on the left, Joe and Elvin are heard on the right. If you're a fan of tenor sax or are building a Hard-Bop, Post-Bop library, I invite you to audition **In 'N Out** by **Joe Henderson**. The music bursts with energy and like many Blue Note LP's from this period and only gets better with repeated listening!

Joe Henderson – Source: Discogs.com, Wikipedia.org



Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis and Johnny Griffin – The First Set-Live at Minton's
Prestige

Submitted for your consideration from the library this time is the second of four live sets at **Minton's Playhouse** by **The Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis-Johnny Griffin Quintet**. This album released in 1964 is titled **The First Set** (PRST 7309) and both saxophonists are anchored by the rock-solid rhythm section of **Junior Mance** on piano; **Larry Gales** on bass and **Ben Riley** on drums. The other three LP's are **The Tenor Scene** (PRLP 7191) released in 1961, then reissued as **The Breakfast Show** (PR 7407/PRST 7407) in 1965. **Live! The Midnight Show** (PRLP 7330/PRST 7330) was also released in 1964 and **The Late Show** (PR 7357/PRST 7357) also hit the stores in 1965. The club was founded by retired tenor saxophonist **Henry Minton** in 1938, becoming famous for its many jam sessions and is credited for the beginning of bebop during the forties. It is also known for its role in the development of modern jazz during the fifties. Minton's was originally open from 1938 to 1974 when a fire caused it to close. It would reopen in 2006 after thirty-two years under the name **Uptown Lounge at Minton's Playhouse** until 2010 when the club closed its doors a second time. It reopened again under the original name after remodeling began in 2012 and it currently resides on the first floor of the **Cecil Hotel at 210 West 118th Street**, while the door for the club is at **206 West 118th Street**. My copy used for this report is the 1971 Stereo reissue (green label with the light blue trident logo at the 12 o'clock position). If you're new to this album and both saxophonists, Eddie is heard on the left speaker and Johnny on the right.

The quintet starts the beat by giving the audience some heat on the album opener, **Billie's Bounce**, written by Charlie Parker in 1945 and a favorite among jazz artists for



creative improvisation. The two horns lead the rhythm section on a sizzling rendition of the theme, then Davis ignites the first solo with a melodic explosion of verses that are jet-propelled. Mance steps in next for an incandescent second statement preceding Griffin who takes his turn delivering a captivating presentation of intense heat on the closing performance. Both horns exchange a few more exuberant phrases ahead of the closing chorus and ending. The music of Thelonious Monk is represented by the first of two compositions that have become jazz standards, **Epistrophy** ends the first side and was written in 1941 with drummer Kenny Clarke. The song opens at mid-tempo with the quintet's delivery of the quirky theme which becomes a perfect background for the innovative solos heard here by Davis, Mance, Griffin, and Gales. The opening statement by Eddie is a propulsive illustration of his firm-tone and remarkable abilities as an instrumentalist. Junior illustrates his harmonic and melodic resourcefulness with a steady sureness that left me wanting more at its completion. Griff takes over for the next interpretation with a bluesy beat that is exceptionally impressive, providing the inspiration for Larry who delivers the final statement with an artistic virtuosity far beyond his twenty-five years.

The second side opens with the second Monk original, **Well, You Needn't**, composed in 1944 and dedicated to jazz vocalist **Charlie Beamon**, who when told the tune was going to be named after him replied: "Well, you need not". The midtempo melody by the quintet has a contagious beat that is suitable for dancing which Monk liked to do on stage during several of his songs. Davis is up first in the solo spotlight and strolls along at a leisurely pace, delivering a charmingly, cheerful performance with conviction. Mance takes the next turn and gets the crowd to clap along as his solo is presented in an equally relaxed manner. Griffin offers an imaginatively peppy performance and Gales wraps up the solos with a gorgeous presentation while Riley provides perfect time and a firm beat in support. The finale is **I'll Remember April** by Gene De Paul, Patricia Johnston, and Don Raye. This popular song made its debut in the 1942 **Abbott and Costello** comedy, **Ride 'Em Cowboy** and is one of the most recorded jazz standards. The quintet makes their rendition, a fun tune to play and it swings from the first notes of the introduction. The opening solo by Eddie offers a display of his inexhaustible effervescence with an assertive tone, followed by Junior who sustains the excitement by expressing great joy on the next reading. Griff takes the next solo spot for a robust workout of startling speed and Ben illustrates his rhythmic flexibility

with an energized performance during the theme's reprise into the climax.

The First Set like the other three albums which together documents a single night's performance by **The Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis-Johnny Griffin Quintet** was recorded by **Rudy Van Gelder**. Here, the legendary engineer makes magic with a beautifully recorded club performance which places the listener in the audience for a "you are there" feeling. The album clocks in just under thirty-five minutes, but the artistry, music, and musicianship makes **The First Set-Recorded Live at Minton's** an attractive acquisition which if you like good sax, merits a serious audition and consideration for any jazz lover's library!

Well, You Needn't, I'll Remember April – Source: JazzStandards.com

Minton's Playhouse, Henry Minton – Source: Wikipedia.org