



Wynton Kelly – Kelly Blue
Riverside Original Recording Series

At first thought, **Wynton Kelly**, an accomplished Hard-Bop pianist and renowned instrumentalist, didn't seem the logical choice to replace **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 concise 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 first discussion in August 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 bass of **Paul Chambers** and **Jimmy Cobb**, who is one of the most exciting and original drummers in jazz. These three men would anchor one of Miles Davis' most influential groups. They were also featured on **Kind of Blue** (Columbia CL 1355/CS 8163). The group would ultimately become a remarkable trio, 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 **Benny Golson** on tenor sax.

The album opens with the first of three tunes by the pianist **Kelly Blue**; The title tune is a midtempo blues that 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 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 exciting twists and turns in each chorus. Nat raises the temperature slightly with an impressive performance emphasizing that the young cornetist was as resourceful a soloist as 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 desire for lost love, regret, and remorse. In the first of four trio performances, Wynton and company introduce the song gradually on the theme. Kelly's pianistic distinctiveness emerges with playful confidence in a stylish, rhapsodic performance on the lead solo, emphasizing his musical form's steady and impressive maturing. Chambers' closing solo is so relaxing; it's like slipping into something comfortable after a long day, 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 based on the 1944 novel by English author Elizabeth Goudge and is another standard from The Great American Songbook 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 friendly and pleasant theme statement. Wynton takes the first solo, presenting a beautiful interpretation. 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 lively presentation illustrating the formidable technique and sophistication in his playing that led Miles Davis to hire him. Golson gives a brilliant performance next, then Adderley turns in an engagingly provocative, captivating reading demonstrating his immaculate intonation. In the following reading, Jaspar suggests a genuinely improvisatory spirit at work, 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 that moves gracefully through each verse. Chambers digs in masterfully on the subsequent interpretation, a testament to his mastery of the bass. Cobb illustrates an excellent grasp of dynamics and tonal sophistication with a boppish edge that stands out prominently.

Wynton Kelly was both a talented composer and a stellar musician. The level of good spirits demonstrated by him and his colleagues on this album of standards and original works is incredibly 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 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** had one of the best jazz trios in the United States. 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 next discussion, **Waltz For Debby** (RLP 399), released the same year. Both LPs 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 first Mono reissue by Victor Entertainment, 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 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 that made their first appearance on the 1956 Riverside album, **New Jazz Conceptions** (RLP 12-223). Bill and Scott begin the introduction, a mild two-instrument dialogue 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 energetic 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 that 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**. It opens with a marvelous solo introduction by Evans before LaFaro and Motion join him for a mix of midtempo flames on the opening melody that is incredibly effective. Bill's opening statement perfectly emphasizes his remarkable technique and facility for complex melodic invention. Scott comes up with some exquisite ideas for 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 was written in 1944 and 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 in 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 briefly comments on the first solo with efficiency, 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 more extraordinary things in the years ahead. Sadly, that wouldn't be the case because he would die in an automobile accident that devastated Evans personally just

ten days after this recording was made. 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!

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



Joe Henderson – In 'n Out
Blue Note

The subject of this third report from the library is 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, **In 'N Out** (Blue Note BLP 4166/BST 84166), was released in 1964, and he's working with an all-star quartet, **Kenny Dorham** on trumpet, **McCoy Tyner** on piano, **Richard Davis** on bass, and **Elvin Jones** on drums. My copy in this report is the 1983 French Stereo pressing by **Pathé Marconi-EMI**, sharing the original catalog number. The French DMM (Direct Metal Mastering) Stereo reissue would be released four years later in 1987.

The title tune, In 'n Out is Henderson's first of three compositions, 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 ferocious excitement in the following reading with a stylistic maturity, making a provocative statement. Kenny is up next, illustrating why he was one of the most individual and stimulating trumpeters in jazz with a lively performance marked by heated passion. Joe returns, cooking with conviction on a short sermon of stunning virtuosity that punctuates the final reading with a robust and aggressive tone ahead of the theme's return and brisk finale.

Punjab, another Henderson original, slows the pace to a medium tempo to end the first side. The quintet opens the song with a bluesy, lyrical interpretation that 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 subsequent interpretation with emotional vitality, which suits his timbre 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 ends the song as it began in a laid-back fashion.

Serenity, Joe's last contribution, opens the second side at midtempo, with the quintet sustaining a mellow tone on the melody while reflecting a solid bop influence. Dorham feels fully relaxed on the lead solo with a firm tone. Henderson shapes the next reading with carefully spaced phrases that perfectly fit his tune's flavor. Tyner gives a marvelously warm performance that communicates his message efficiently. Davis' first solo on the album is an articulate statement that swings straight ahead back to the theme and climax.

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 in the introduction. Kenny is up first with a clean-lined opening statement characterized by the feeling of well-being and contentment in each verse. Joe makes the next performance come alive with cheerfulness and good spirits. McCoy excels in the following performance delivering an energetic improvisation to a satisfying result. Elvin is outstanding, exchanging with both horns on the final solo before the close.

For the finale, the quintet closes with a mid-tempo 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 an excellent 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 LPs 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).

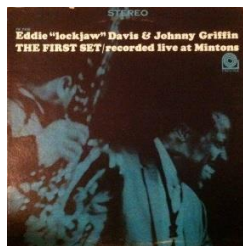
His career would last over forty years, recording for other labels, including Milestone, Elektra Musician, Fantasy, CTI Records, Red Records, and Verve Records. He returned to Blue Note in 1985 to perform in a special concert marking the rebirth of Blue Note Records, **One Night With Blue Note Preserved** (BTDK 85117) and a two-volume LP in 1986, **The State of The Tenor-Live at The Village Vanguard** (BT-85123/BT-85126). Still, 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 in 1994 in a 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 instrument. Kenny, McCoy, and Richard are heard on the left, and Joe and Elvin on the right. If you're a tenor sax fan or building a Hard-Bop, Post-Bop library, I invite you to check out **In 'n Out** by **Joe Henderson**. Like many Blue Note LPs from this period, the music bursts with energy and only improves with repeated listening!

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



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

The second of four live sets at Minton's Playhouse by The Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis-Johnny Griffin Quintet is submitted for your consideration in this month's final report. This album, released in 1964, is titled **The First Set** (Prestige PR 7309/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 LPs 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 initially 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 again. 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 for this report is the 1971 Stereo

reissue. 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 jet-propelled verses. 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 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. **Epistrophe** closes 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 subsequent interpretation with an exceptionally impressive bluesy beat, inspiring 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 would be named after him, replied: "Well, you need not." The midtempo melody by the quintet has a contagious beat 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 leisurely, delivering a charmingly spirited 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, Gales wraps up the solos with a gorgeous presentation, while Riley provides perfect time and a strong beat in support.

The finale is **I'll Remember April** by Gene De Paul, Patricia Johnston, and Don Raye. This popular song debuted in the 1942 **Abbott and Costello** comedy **Ride' Em Cowboy** and is among the most recorded jazz standards. The quintet



makes their rendition a fun tune to play and swings from the introduction's first notes. The opening solo by Eddie offers an assertive expression of his inexhaustible enthusiasm. Junior follows, sustaining the excitement by expressing great joy on the next reading. Griff takes the next solo spot for a robust workout of astonishing speed, and Ben illustrates his rhythmic flexibility with an energized performance during the theme's reprise into the climax.

Like the companion albums, **The First Set** documents a single night's performance by The Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis-Johnny Griffin Quintet, which Rudy Van Gelder recorded. 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 under thirty-five minutes, but the artistry, music, and musicianship make **The First Set-Recorded Live at Minton's** an attractive acquisition. 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