

ANDRÉ PREVIN



with  
MUNDELL LOWE  
& RAY BROWN

CD-83303



*Songs of Harold Arlen,  
Duke Ellington & others*

- 1 Between the Devil and the  
Deep Blue Sea [4:37]
- 2 A Sleepin' Bee [5:09]
- 3 Come Rain or Come Shine [4:04]
- 4 Stormy Weather [4:29]
- 5 Over the Rainbow [4:33]
- 6 Let's Fall In Love [3:17]
- 7 Day Dream / Prelude to a Kiss [4:38]
- 8 Good Queen Bess [4:18]
- 9 Things Ain't What They Used To Be [4:14]
- 1 It Don't Mean A Thing If It Ain't  
Got That Swing [3:01]
- 1 Five O'Clock Whistle [5:25]
- 1 Come Sunday [3:58]
- 3 C Jam Blues [4:37]

ANDRÉ PREVIN, Piano  
MUNDELL LOWE, Guitar  
RAY BROWN, Bass

*Bösendorfer Piano*

**Total Playing Time [57:38]**



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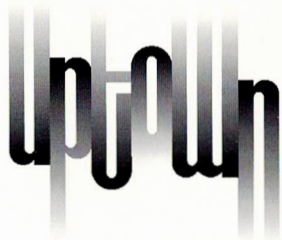
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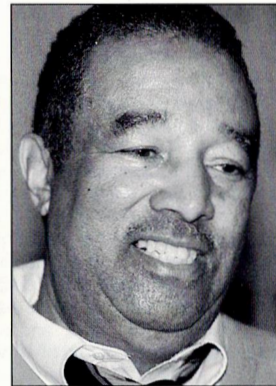




Laudatory exuberance has been out of fashion for ages. It's associated nowadays only with advertisements and book-jacket blurbs, or with political conventions and the award ceremonies to which show business is addicted. But if whirling words are as a rule banned almost everywhere else, the present occasion calls for a rebirth of adjectival enthusiasm.

Nothing less would be suited to the music recorded here, so free and light, loose, breezing, unimpeded by affectations of any kind, with its triumvirate of marvellous musicians addressing a collection of marvellous tunes: What a treat!

I'd guess that all of fifteen or twenty seconds were given over to rehearsal. There's such subtle interplay of improvised intimacies, so much honest-to-goodness spontaneity maintained here, that listening becomes what listening at its best can be: something akin to eavesdropping. The taste, touch, wit and wisdom of Ray Brown and Mundell Lowe are consistent guarantors of that delightful accompanimental romping — and soloistic fervor — that everyone always wants to encounter in jazz music.



Photos: © 1990 TELARC

Left to Right: André Previn,  
Mundell Lowe & Ray Brown

And, of course, then there's André Previn.

No one ought to question it if told that in reality this illustrious name identifies, coincidentally, three different musicians: [1] a composer of finely crafted scores ranging from a Broadway musical to a piano concerto in Ashkenazy's repertoire; [2] a virtuoso pianist whose command of a multiplicity of styles yields, among other antitheses, impeccable Mozart and dazzling jazz improvisations; and [3] a stellar member of the small handful of distinguished world-class maestros who conduct our major European and American orchestras, brilliantly performing and recording a large, diverse representation of the symphonic repertoire, including some of the literature's most refractory, most demanding scores.

Especially because type-casting is a quarantine that isolates the artist within some small space circumscribed by public expectations, it seems comprehensively astonishing that these summits of musical achievement, each so different from the other, should in fact belong to one man. Nor, despite that, is the man in any sense even mildly schizoid: André Previn's endowments include delightful personality traits as handsomely integrated as are his musical powers.



Recollections irresistibly do become an order of business for the present purpose, and listening to this delightful recording recalls to my mind the time I first came to know André, nearly a half-century ago. It was when he and I were among the hundred or so musicians who belonged to the MGM staff. (I still believe, despite his disclaimers, that it was André himself somehow and somewhere behind the scenes who saw to it that I was engaged by the studio.) Historians of cultural ephemera now call that time the era of Hollywood's halcyon days: before television came to rule the roost, before the movies were even called films, let alone cinema, and when each major studio maintained its own very large orchestral forces as well as an ample roster of composers, orchestrators, and various other musical specialists.

In all of that impressive population there was no other quite like André, the worldly-wise eighteen-year-old, debonair, sly, charming, suave, always in control of a steely wit that could debunk and dispatch promptly any unwary supplier of pompous baloney, hypocrisy, self-inflation, and/or associated follies. Then, as now, André was at once artfully intellectual and unconcernedly down-to-earth, a stylish raconteur and a rakish jester, a model of self-disciplined seriousness who was also a connoisseur of the world's more frivolous absurdities.

Although about a half-dozen years my junior, André was everyone's senior when it came to an array of musical skills. This plural has special significance, for even then, while still a teenager, he commanded the prowess of several superior musicians combined into an amazing one. André would be called on to orchestrate scores for certain "composers" (whose own abilities limited them to thumping out notes at the keyboard). Or if some particularly monstrous piano part had to be played at sight — and recorded at once! — it would be André, as uncannily a sightreader as any I have ever known, who would save the MGM day. Or when an authentically sophisticated score was to be composed, it would be André to whom the task was assigned; or when a meticulous conductor was needed; or a concert pianist at home everywhere in the classic or romantic literature; or a buoyant jazz pianist; or if *Evenings On The Roof* (in those years a peerless concert series presenting serious new music) needed a pianist for a performance of, say, *Pierrot Lunaire* . . . or . . . or . . . in sum, André was already in those early years a kind of freak vector, a wizard, a musicmaking marvel.

Running through the diverse models of expertise was, and is today, a readily discernible Ariadne's thread: musical scrupulousness of the highest order, a musical outlook entirely free from blague. Surely it's one of the more remarkable of his accomplishments that André's

eminence as a master conductor has been gained without pandering, without grandstanding — that is, without any quasi-ecstatic lunges and arm-waving and hair-flying. André's audiences have learned that gymnastics and grimaces are not the essential elements of beautifully projected, revelatory performance. That's an especially important lesson in an age that lusts for the mediocre, with imprecision mistaken for profundity and loudness for passion.

It must have been much like a voyage of rediscovery when, after many, many years and a relatively vast esthetic distance away from jazz music, André walked into the recording venue not long ago with Ray Brown and Joe Pass at his side. There must have been at least a little apprehension in the air. What would happen? Confronting the singularly striated time in which jazz revels — and the subtle improvised arguments against that rigorous pulsing — would the *stuff* be there? Would André still be *swingin'*? Of course the answer (available to listeners: thanks to the recording that immediately preceded this present one) turned out to be a rousing, felicitous yes.

And so here we have the second in what one hopes will be an extended series of recordings with André and his colleagues swinging so gloriously.

On the subject of swinging gloriously, I'm reminded of the time Louis Armstrong was asked to identify some fundamentals for the jazz performer. He said that above everything else a musician had to be able to swing when playing just quarter-notes right on the beat. And André demonstrates again and again how to pass that severe test *summa cum laude*. Attentive listeners are likely to savor, among the generous collection of examples, a prime instance in *Come Rain or Come Shine*.

With pianists, however, nothing is more demanding than the business of holding steady a reliable jazz declamation while engaging a temporal structure that is in fact "free" (non-metrical: "*senza tempo*"). How is it done? This is one of the magical procedures of which Art Tatum was undisputed master, so it can be inferred that modulatory finesse and the invention of an exquisite, elaborate harmonization are very much part of the story. For that, plus everything else involved, André's exemplary unfolding of *Stormy Weather* here provides an ideal model.

Then there's the joyousness of *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* and *Let's Fall In Love*; and there's André's machine-gun finger-attacks — ten hammers — in *It Don't Mean A Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing*. And almost everywhere there's the exhilarating juxtaposition of contrasting items that seem to be separated by hardly more than microtime: André's sudden eruptions of a million notes at the speed of light followed by open air and a single chord or two; the trio's teeth-gritting urgencies alongside amiable capriciousness; sizzling temperament supplanted at once by insouciant detachment; wild uproars succeeded immediately by sweet-spirited lyricism.

A funky mercurial amalgam of that kind is but one of the lofty musical pleasures belonging uniquely to the world of jazz. Aficionados and others, here invited by Ray Brown, Mundell Lowe, and André Previn to visit an enchanting corner of that world, can count on pleasures aplenty. They can also count on an invitation from this listener to join in celebrating and cheering for my very dear, very swinging friend and his beguiling cohorts.

— *Mel Powell*

*Mel Powell is a 1990 Pulitzer Prize winner for Distinguished Musical Composition.*

*Between the Devil and  
the Deep Blue Sea*  
(Harold Arlen)  
Mills Music, Inc. (ASCAP)

*A Sleepin' Bee*  
(Harold Arlen)  
Harwin Music Co. (ASCAP)

*Come Rain or Come Shine*  
(Harold Arlen)  
Chappell & Co. (ASCAP)

*Stormy Weather*  
(Harold Arlen)  
Arko Music Corp. (ASCAP)

*Over the Rainbow*  
(Harold Arlen)  
EMI Feist Catalog, Inc. (ASCAP)

*Let's Fall In Love*  
(Harold Arlen)  
Bourne Co. (ASCAP)

*Day Dream*  
(Duke Ellington, John LaTouche, Billy Strayhorn)  
EMI Robbins Music Corp. (ASCAP)

*Prelude To A Kiss*  
(Duke Ellington, Irving Mills, Irving Gordon)  
Mills Music, Inc. (ASCAP)

*Good Queen Bess*  
(Johnny Hodges)  
Mills Music, Inc. (ASCAP)

*Things Ain't What They Used To Be*  
(Mercer Ellington, Ted Persons)  
Tempo Music, Inc. (ASCAP)

*It Don't Mean A Thing If It Ain't Got  
That Swing*  
(Duke Ellington, Irving Mills)  
Famous Music Corp. / Mills Music, Inc. (ASCAP)

*Five O'Clock Whistle*  
(Joseph Myrow, Ken Gannon, Gene Erwin)  
Warner Brothers, Inc. (ASCAP)

*Come Sunday*  
(Duke Ellington)  
G. Schirmer, Inc. (ASCAP)

*C Jam Blues*  
(Duke Ellington)  
EMI Robbins Music Corp. (ASCAP)

## Technical Information

Recorded at The American Academy & Institute of Arts & Letters, New York, March 9-10, 1990  
Microphones: B & K 4006 (piano), Schoeps MK-41 (guitar), AKG C-60 (bass)

Digital Recording Processor: dbx/CTI 18-Bit, 128 times oversampling A/D

Console: Studer 961

Monitor Speakers: B & W 801 Matrix, Series II



Monitor Amplifier: Threshold S-500  
Stasis Series II

Microphone Cables: Music Interface Technology

Control Room Interconnecting Cables: Music Interface Technology and Monster Cable

Control Room Acoustic Treatment: Sonex from illbruck/usa

Tube Traps from ASC

Digital Editing: Sony DAE 3000

*Bösendorfer Imperial provided by Pro Piano, New York*

*Piano Technician: Barbara Pease*

## Other André Previn / Jazz on Telarc:

*After Hours* with Previn, Joe Pass and Ray Brown (CD-83302)

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