

ANDRÉ PREVIN

After Hours

with JOE PASS
& RAY BROWN

CD-83302



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ANDRÉ PREVIN, Piano
JOE PASS, Guitar
RAY BROWN, Bass

Bösendorfer Piano

Total Playing Time [65:54]



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You might say it was a busy week for André Previn. Sunday afternoon, March 26, 1989, he conducted the Los Angeles Philharmonic in a Beethoven/Tchaikovsky program which concluded with the emotionally wrenching *Pathétique Symphony*.

The very next evening, as pianist for a Philharmonic Chamber Music Society concert, he knocked off such finger-busting works as Prokofiev's *Cello Sonata* and Mendelssohn's *Piano Trio in D minor*.

Forty-eight hours later, André Previn slipped into another concert hall across town to make this record: his first traditional jazz album in twenty-seven years.

(A few days after that, Previn was back in the studio with the Los Angeles Philharmonic to record, again for Telarc, Dvořák's Eighth Symphony, among other works. But who's counting?)

It's hard to imagine any other musician in the world who could have pulled this off. But Previn is nonchalant about his mastery at musical chairs.

"A good week," he allows. "It's fun to realize it can be done."

André Previn skyrocketed to fame as a jazz pianist while still in his late teens. During the 1950s, he worked with, among others, Shelly Manne, Dizzy Gillespie, Benny Goodman, Billie Holiday and Shorty Rogers. During this period, though he was also very active as a composer and conductor at Hollywood film studios, Previn made more than 60 jazz recordings.

Then in the late 1960s, Previn began devoting himself almost exclusively to conducting symphonic music. Here again, fame came quickly. In short order, he was named Music Director of the Houston, London, and Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestras. Most recently (1985-1989) he served as Music Director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and he is

principal conductor of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. He also regularly appears as guest conductor of such venerable orchestras as the Vienna Philharmonic and Berlin Philharmonic. He continues to perform as a piano soloist, especially in Mozart Concertos, and to compose works for orchestra, chamber ensembles, and the stage.

Despite this embarrassment of musical riches, André Previn felt something was missing: the unique satisfaction of improvising with wonderful musicians with whom you're on the same wavelength; the sheer *fun* of jazz; the ecstasy when it clicks; and most of all, the camaraderie.

"I missed the guys," said Previn. "The music you can always hear on records or play at home when nobody's listening. The nice jazz guys are the best people in the world."

Previn admitted to some trepidation about returning to his musical past. (A couple of jazzy forays with violinist Itzhak Perlman some years back don't really count; the tunes were all composed by Previn.) And so he handpicked his collaborators: two of the finest jazz players in the world.

"I'm not a total fool," said Previn. "If you're going to make a record in this genre after more than a quarter-century, having Joe Pass and Ray Brown on hand is the best insurance policy you can have. Whatever we did, it wouldn't sound terrible."

Previn also instituted a bail-out plan. "I told Joe and Ray at the beginning of the session: if after we're through, we think this is going to embarrass anybody, we would simply forget it ever happened. At the end of the first number they said they didn't know what I was talking about, so that was fine."

Though this record marks the first time the three have worked together as a trio, Previn's musical association with Ray Brown actually dates back to the 1950s. The two made a number of very popular jazz albums together, and Brown frequently played for Previn in the film studios. Brown and Pass, of course, are regular collaborators.

Joe Pass and André Previn had worked together only sporadically, but the two had recently joined forces for a public radio broadcast, one of André Previn's *High Performance* shows.

Though it had been many years since Ray Brown and Previn had even seen each other, the old rapport was immediately renewed at the "After Hours" session.

Brown, just two-and-a-half years Previn's senior, broke the ice with some gentle teasing.

"Did you say you have a five-year-old son?" he asked Previn, incredulously.

Previn nodded.

"Good God, my son is forty," said Brown, shaking his head.

Since the session was being recorded at Pasadena's Ambassador Auditorium, the Telarc crew had to work around the hall's regular concert schedule. A four-hour preliminary shift was called for mid-afternoon, then the trio had to clear out to make way for a performance by the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra. The second jazz session ran from 10:30 p.m. until 2:30 a.m. in the morning.

Telarc producer Robert Woods apologized to his trio for the bizarre schedule, but the musicians took the news of the late, late shift in stride.

"That's normally when we play our music," explained Brown. "If you do a gig at a New York nightclub, you start around ten, ten-thirty, and finish around three a.m. The body feels comfortable with those hours."

"I don't think I ever made a jazz record during the day," added Previn.

As befits a makeshift jazz club, the onstage lights were turned way down low for the session. You'd never have known you were in a lavish, onyx-walled, 1200-seat concert hall, where Vladimir Horowitz and Herbert von Karajan have graced the stage.

During breaks, the guys drank coffee, munched on chocolate chip cookies and reminisced about old times. The Oscar Peterson anecdotes flew fast and furiously. (Both Ray Brown and Joe Pass have worked for years with the legendary pianist; Previn, a friend of Peterson's, has cited Peterson, Art Tatum and Bill Evans as his three jazz idols.)

Brown remembered the night he and Peterson were at an "after hours" club in Washington, D.C. listening to Art Tatum play until dawn. ("After hours" denotes a joint where jazz players convene after their regular gigs are over.) A well-known singer of the time was also there, and someone suggested he join Tatum for a couple of tunes.

"Fine," said the singer, looking straight into Tatum's eyes. "Let's do 'Tenderly' in B natural."

"It was clearly a challenge," recalled Brown. "Pianists liked to avoid that key at all costs. And 'Tenderly' is difficult in any key."

Tatum told the vocalist he'd see if he could find his way through it. He then launched into a labyrinthine introduction of such impenetrable harmonic complexity that the singer never did find his starting note.

"Oscar and I were in a corner of the room just dying of laughter," chuckled Brown.

The subject of key signatures was barely touched on at the Previn-Pass-Brown "After Hours" session. Each player simply threw out suggestions for tunes, which were either taken up, laughed at, or briefly played and discarded. There were only two stipulations: nothing too far out of the mainstream and no "killer tempos," both in deference to André Previn's long "hiatus."

The musicians then briefly made an oral "chart" of changes, and started playing.

Instant magic. The Telarc staff and we few lucky guests invited to sit in on the session shook our heads in disbelief and began tapping our feet. It was horrendously difficult to keep from getting up and dancing.

"There were no preparations, arrangements, or intercuts," said Previn. "Much like I used to do in the old days, I was working on total instinct."

Just in case one of the musicians wanted to play something the others didn't know, Previn had brought along plenty of music paper. At 2:39 a.m. Thursday, when the session ended, it still lay on top of a pile of recording equipment, untouched.

In one instance, Ray Brown suggested a tune that Previn couldn't quite remember: Ellington's "What Am I Here For."

And so, quietly, patiently, Brown sang the melody while accompanying himself on the bass. The results of that magical little music lesson made for one of the most stunning cuts on the album.

Another time, the guys were just fooling around, warming up before launching into another full-fledged tune. Serendipitously, tape was rolling. The results: "One For Bunz," the final track on the album. ("Bunz" is Previn's playful nickname for his wife, Heather.)

"We had no idea it was being recorded," said Previn, "so it has no ending of any kind. It just drifts off. But we all kind of liked it, so we left it in."

"It's very typical of the whole atmosphere that night: shall we say, loose. Just three guys having a good time."

There'll Never Be Another You

Music by Harry Warren
Morley Music Co. (ASCAP)

This well-loved ballad dates from the height of Warren's success as a film composer, in the early 1940s. The multiple Academy Award-winning, Brooklyn-born composer also wrote such familiar tunes as "That's Amore," "Atchison, Topeka, and the Santa Fe," "We're in the Money," "Chattanooga Choo Choo," and "You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby," among many others.

I Only Have Eyes For You

Music by Harry Warren
Warner Bros. Inc. (ASCAP)

Warren wrote this irresistably sentimental tune shortly after leaving a successful Tin Pan Alley career to make his way in Hollywood. The song first appeared in the 1934 movie musical "Dames," starring Dick Powell and Ruby Keeler.

What Am I Here For

Music by Duke Ellington
EMI Robbins Catalog Inc. (ASCAP)

"Ellington plays the piano," composer and arranger Billy Strayhorn once said, "but the band is his real instrument." Ellington fans generally agree that the Duke's orchestra came closest to perfection around 1940, with the arrival of Strayhorn himself, tenor sax player Ben Webster, and bass player Jimmy Blanton. The ensemble's brilliance in turn inspired Ellington to create a dazzling set of tunes, including this ballad, written in 1942.

Limehouse Blues

Music by Philip Braham
WB Inc. (ASCAP)

An offbeat version of the 1922 classic. Limehouse Blues made an early appearance at one of the most celebrated concerts of the century. It was played by the Paul Whiteman Band at Aeolian Hall, New York, February 12, 1924, the same concert at which George Gershwin gave the world premiere of his "Rhapsody in Blue." The overflow crowd included Leopold Stokowski, John Philip Sousa, Igor Stravinsky, Fritz Kreisler, and Jascha Heifetz.

All The Things You Are

Music by Jerome Kern
Polygram International Publishing, Inc. (ASCAP)

One of the most ravishing tunes ever written, "All The Things You Are" was a hit song from a flop show: a 1939 debacle called "Very Warm for May." The musical revolved around love amidst the resistable backdrop of a New England stock company. After 59 performances, the show closed, and Kern renounced Broadway in favor of the silver screen.

Honeysuckle Rose

Music by Thomas "Fats" Waller
Chapell & Co. (ASCAP)

The son of a clergyman, "Fats" Waller personified the early stride-piano style. His extraordinary delicacy and fluency as a keyboard artist influenced musicians from Art Tatum to Count Basie. Waller also wrote hundreds of popular tunes, many of which were dashed off an hour or so before a recording session. "Honeysuckle Rose" became a staple of the Benny Goodman Band in the 1930s.

I Got It Bad And That Ain't Good

Music by Duke Ellington
EMI Robbins Catalog Inc. (ASCAP)

This well-known song originated in an all-black revue called "Jump For Joy" which played Hollywood's Mayan Theater for several months in 1941. The show was built around the concept that Jim Crow and Uncle Tom were finally dying, hence the celebratory title. Dorothy Dandridge and Ivie Anderson were featured, along with Duke Ellington's band.

Smoke Gets In Your Eyes

Music by Jerome Kern
Polygram International Publishing, Inc. (ASCAP)

This all-time Kern favorite was introduced in the 1933 musical "Roberta," starring Fay Templeton in her farewell to the stage. The show was set in Paris, in a fashionable hat shop. An unlikely love affair develops between a Russian princess and an American fullback. Clearly, "Roberta" owed its great success to the song that stopped the show at every performance: "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes."

Cotton Tail

Music By Duke Ellington
EMI Robbins Catalog Inc. (ASCAP)

This lively standard is a variation of George Gershwin's "I Got Rhythm." Ellington wrote it in 1940 as a show-off vehicle for his then new tenor sax player, Ben Webster, whom Studs Terkel has described as "a big kindly man from Kansas City."

Laura

Music by David Raksin
WB Music Corp. (ASCAP)

When Cole Porter was asked, of all the tunes he knew in the world that he hadn't composed, which one would he have most wanted to have written, he answered "Laura." It is said that Otto Preminger originally wanted to use either "Summertime" or "Sophisticated Ladies" for the title song of his 1944 suspense film, "Laura," starring Gene Tierney. What an enormous loss to music that would have been.

One For Bunz

Traditional Blues

— Gail Eichenthal

Gail Eichenthal is an arts writer for CBS Radio. She has been the host of the Los Angeles Philharmonic National Radio Broadcast since 1978 and has been its producer since 1983.

Technical Information

Recorded at Ambassador Auditorium, Pasadena, California on March 29, 1989
Microphones: B & K 4003 (piano), Schoeps M221B (bass), Neumann KM-140 (guitar)
Digital Recording Processor: dbx/CTI 18-Bit A/D
Console: Ramsa/Windt S840B
Monitor Speakers: ADS 980 internally wired with Monster Cable
Monitor Amplifier: Krell KMA-160
Microphones & Interconnecting Cables: Monster Cable ProLink Series I & Interlink, M1 & M1000,
and Music Interface Technologies
Control Room Acoustic Treatment: Sonex from illbruck/usa
Tube Traps
Digital Editing: Sony DAE 3000

Joe Pass appears courtesy of Pablo Records.

Bösendorfer Piano

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