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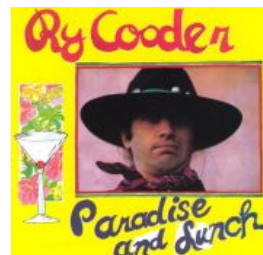
# Ry Cooder – Paradise And Lunch – Warner Brothers/Reprise/Speakers Corner

by Audiophile Audition / June 27, 2018 / [Pop/Rock/World CD Reviews](#), [SACD & Other Hi-Res Reviews](#)

*A classic 1974 roots album gets a well-deserved analog update!*

**Ry Cooder – Paradise And Lunch – Warner Brothers/Reprise MS 2179/Speakers Corner (2016) 180-gram stereo vinyl, 36:51 \*\*\*\*\*:**

Ry Cooder's *Paradise And Lunch* was released in 1974 to critical acclaim. Backed by a stellar ensemble of jazz (with no less than Earl Hines one one track) and rock musicians, it represented the stylized,



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modern blues contexts that imbue Cooder's music. Speakers Corner has re-mastered this classic album to 180-gram vinyl and it is terrific! Side One opens with an update of "Tamp 'Em Up Solid". The jaunty laid-back grooves are framed by exquisite acoustic guitar picking. The ever-present "Sunday" undertones bask in gospel backup vocals and the gentle roll of a train cadence. Washington Phillip's "Tattler" is revisited by infectious island rhythms and playful ambiance. The switch to electric maintains the low-keyed elegance. Within the rock community, there is a genuine respect for the roots of blues music. Cooder is among the most supportive in this endeavor.



The homage continues with a country-based cover of Blind Willie

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Bobby Womack song has seen many translations, and they are all noteworthy.

Side Two is equally prominent in establishing authenticity and musical vision. A medley ("I'm A Fool For Cigarettes/Feelin' Good") feels like traditional blues homage (J.B. Lenoir, Sydney Bailey, Jim Dickinson) with foot stomping Delta resonance. Cooder puts on a virtuosic display with acoustic guitar and mandolin. His idiosyncratic vocal intonation fits the musical arrangements. There is a winsome quality that permeates this upbeat translation. Bobby Miller's "If Walls Could Talk" (first recorded by Little Milton) is a joyful 12-bar romp with counter vocals and a potent slide solo. Another pleasant surprise is the evocative Drifters hit, "Mexican Divorce" (an early Bury Bacharach tune). The tight-knit arrangement features Cooder's winsome, heartfelt vocals, marimba and violin. It creates a cinematic "border town" mood with festive agility. The versatility of Cooder is always on display. The finale, "Ditty Wa Ditty" is a brilliant duet with "trumpet style" jazz piano legend Earl



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Hines. This iconic slice of *Americana* was written by Willie Dixon and recorded by Bo Diddley in 1956 for Checker Records. The mythical town alluded to in the title was part of the African-American songwriting culture. Hines' signature rolls and Cooder's punctuated riffs elevate the anecdotal song. It is an appropriate close to an unforgettable album.

Speakers Corner has done a superb job in re-mastering *Paradise And Lunch* to audiophile vinyl. The subtlety of analog mixing is captured with the right amount of vibrancy. The guitars and mandolin are crisp, warm and devoid of unnecessarily augmented studio effects. Hines' piano sounds like a vintage recording. The percussion and bass are dialed back. Horns blend in effortlessly without any shrillness. Like any great recording, it gets better with each additional play.

### TrackList:

*Side One:* Tamp 'Em Up Solid; Tattler; Married Man's A Fool; Jesus On The Mainline; It's All Over Now

*Side Two:* I'm A Fool For a Cigarette/Feelin' Good; If Walls Could Talk; Mexican Divorce; Ditty Wa Ditty

### Performing Artists:

Ry Cooder – guitar, mandolin, vocals; Ronnie Barron – piano, organ; Earl Hines – piano; Plas Johnson – alto saxophone; Oscar Brashear – cornet; Red Callender – double bass; John Duke – double bass; Russ Titelman – bass; Chris Ethridge – bass; Milt Holland – drums, percussion; Jim Keltner – drums; George Bohanon – horn arrangements; Nick DeCaro – string arrangements

–Robbie Gerson

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