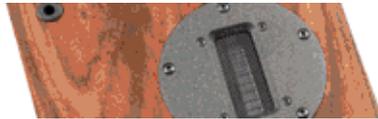


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## Bill Evans – The Bill Evans Album – Speakers Corner Records

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by Audiophile Audition | Nov 15, 2019 | [Jazz CD Reviews](#), [SACD & Other Hi-Res Reviews](#) | 0 comments

**Bill Evans – The Bill Evans Album – Columbia Records C 30855 (1971)/Speakers Corner Records (2016) 180-gram stereo vinyl, 48:34 \*\*\*\*\*:**



(Bill Evans – piano, Fender Rhodes; Eddie Gomez – double bass; Marty Morrell – drums)

The vast legacy of jazz pianist Bill Evans has endured for over half-a-century. After being part of the first Miles Davis Sextet, the *Kind Of Blue* album began a musical career that may never be replicated. Like many pianists of his era, he was influenced by the harmonics of 20th century classical composers like Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel. This new wave of jazz interpretation included *modal inflection*, *added tone chord* (also prevalent in country and rock 'n'

roll), *modulation* and *motivic development*. His interpretation of standards and original material was fueled by a unique ability to play two different tempos simultaneously. While Evans performed as a solo artist and sideman, his greatest success came in trio recordings. His most renowned trio included drummer Paul Motian and double bassist Scott LeFarge. In just under two years, Evans and this trio recorded four albums (*Portrait In Jazz*, *Explorations*, *Sunday At The Village Vanguard* and *Waltz For Debby*) for the Riverside label. Despite significant personal health issues, Evans remained prolific and garnered both critical and commercial success. One of his most celebrated collaborations was with Eddie Gomez and Marty Morell. In a brief seven-year period, the trio released 14 recordings. Until his untimely death in 1980, Evans recorded and performed without a major interruption.

Speakers Corner Records has released a 180-gram re-mastered vinyl of two-time *Grammy* award-winning (*Best Jazz Instrumental Solo*, *Best Jazz Performance By A Group*), *The Bill Evans Album*. Recorded in 1971, it showcased the transformative music of this pianist. In retrospect, every Bill Evans release is memorable. *The Bill Evans Album* is unique on two fronts. All seven tracks are original compositions. As “Funkallero” opens Side 1, listeners may be astonished to hear the master on Fender Rhodes. This new texture seems peculiar at first, but when Gomez adds his rhythmic double bass and Morrell eases in, the trio launches into a cool, bluesy swing. Evans solos on electric piano gracefully and then introduces the inimitable acoustic piano which adds muscle to the arrangement. Whether it’s electric or acoustic, the trio is always in step. “Two Lonely People” is one of those ethereal, gorgeous ballads whose core emotion is distilled by Evans. Eventually the trio shift into 3/4 time signature with explicit right hand notation. As with most things Evans, there are hushed moments followed by syncopated tempo upticks before a circular turn to the opening verse. The overall chemistry displayed by this group is compelling. On “Sugar Plum”, Evans seems to break out alternate tempo in each hand, with occasional descending chords. There is a gentle swing vibe as Evans shines on acoustic piano with a barrage of chording and notation. After a double bass solo (with two chord piano repeat support), the Fender Rhodes is re-introduced with a bluesy, textured solo. The back and forth between E.P. and piano is catchy and fluid. One of Evans’ earliest original standards, “Waltz For Debby” is covered on this album. Even if you never heard this song, it will produce a melodic familiarity like Richard Rodgers or Jerome Kern. Again, the trio glides into a more up tempo signature that is joyous and meticulous. Evans, Gomez and Morrell interact forcefully and the musical results are stunning. Throughout *The Bill Evans Album*, Gomez meets Evans’ percussive intonation with equal fury, and Morrell sparkles with delicate cymbal work and terrific drum breaks.

Side 2 is a departure. “T.T.T. (Twelve Tone Tune)” draws on classical inspiration (especially 20th Century) to adapt this controversial structure to free flowing movement. Evans infuses near-halting rhythms as Gomez works in his gritty bass lines. A switch to Fender Rhodes changes the ambience. Morrell nails two drum breaks. This exploration showcases the close association between classical and jazz idioms. The liner notes ascribe a 16-bar blues moniker to “Re: Person I Know”. But there is an impressionistic, lilting resonance to this late-night ballad. Evans frames the imagery of blues, but with a fluid, abstract performance. It is complicated and sounds different on each additional listen. It’s hard to believe the genesis for “Comrade Conrad” is a toothpaste commercial. The melody possesses an unassuming charm. Evans seems to

coordinate a left-hand stride roll with a bouncy intonation (almost 5/4 time). The ensuing jauntiness is aided by Gomez's seamless bass and Morrell's brush work. When the electric piano is dropped in, it adds finesse.

*The Bill Evans Album* was a milestone for piano jazz. Speakers Corner Records superb re-mastering will engage jazz fans. Both the acoustic piano and Fender Rhodes represent sharp and mellow tonality with equal balance and mixing. When the trio is playing simultaneously, they sound like a single unit. Certainly the psychedelic album cover art will raise a nostalgic smile.

### TrackList:

#### Side 1:

Funkallero;  
The Two Lonely People;  
Sugar Plum;  
Waltz For Debby

#### Side 2:

T.T.T. (Twelve Tone Tune) Re: Person I Knew  
Comrade Conrad

—Robbie Gerson

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