



1. A NIGHTINGALE SANG IN BERKELEY SQUARE (7:16)
(Eric Maschwitz - Manning Sherwin - Jack Strachey)
Colgems EMI Music Inc. / Shapiro, Bernstein & Co., Inc.
2. I WISH I KNEW (4:46)
(Mack Gordon - Harry Warren) Warner Bros. Inc.
3. STOMPIN' AT THE SAVOY (5:16)
(Andy Razaf - Benny Goodman - Edgar Sampson - Chick Webb) EMI Robbins Catalog, Inc. / RYTVOG Inc.
4. BOARDWALK BLUES (6:05)
(Bill Mays) Edson Pub. Co.
5. LUSH LIFE (5:53)
(Billy Strayhorn) Tempo Music, Inc.
6. I'M CONFESSIN' (THAT I LOVE YOU) (4:11)
(Doc Dougherty - Ellis Reynolds - Al J. Neiburg)
Bourne Co.
7. GUESS I'LL HANG MY TEARS OUT TO DRY (6:51)
(Jule Styne - Sammy Cahn) Statford Music Corp. / Producers Music Pub. Co.
8. JITTERBUG WALTZ (6:05)
(Fats Waller) Chappell & Co., Inc.
9. THANKSGIVING PRAYER (5:00)
(Bill Mays) Edson Pub. Co.
10. WHY DID I CHOOSE YOU? / NEVER LET ME GO (5:07)
(Michael Leonard - Herbert Martin) BJS Music Corp./ Edwin H. Morris & Co., Inc. / (Raymond B. Evans - Jay Livingston) Famous Music Corp.
11. GRANDPA'S SPELLS (1:28)
(Jelly Roll Morton) Edwin H. Morris & Co., Inc.

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BILL MAYS piano

Produced by Carl E. Jefferson
Assistant Producer: Nick Phillips
Digitally Recorded live at Maybeck Recital Hall,
Berkeley, CA September 27, 1992
Recording Engineer: Dave Luke
Assistant Recording Engineer: Barbara Fisher
Remote Recording Coordinator: Bud Spangler /
Syntropy Audio
Assembled by Phil Edwards at PER,
Hayward, CA
Mastered by George Horn
Production Coordinator: Elizabeth Bell
Art Direction: Kent Judkins
Cover Photography by Ron Schwerin
Liner Photography by James Gudeman

Bill Mays appears courtesy of DMP Records.

Bill Mays plays the Yamaha S-400 B piano
on this recording (tuned and maintained by
Fred Allen, Richmond, CA).

A very special thank you to Marilyn Ross and
Dick Whittington for their continuing
contribution to both the Bay Area music scene,
and the "Live at Maybeck Recital Hall" series.

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Elastic imagining distinguishes one musician from another. Stretching musical ideas to fit his own interpretive loom is accomplished so frequently by Bill Mays that he could become another definition of 'amazing' and have it spelled 'a-MAYS-ing!'

In the inveterate historic Concord Jazz Maybeck Recital Hall recordings, Bill Mays' Volume 26 sets forth a blistering standard of excellence. Included are two original songs: **Boardwalk Blues** and **Thanksgiving Prayer**, plus an array of ten other tunes that bounce with vitality. Mays dents and fattens notes until they enter an altered, but recognizable state, leaving no doubt as to either the song title or to the man who created that particular rendition.

Bringing diversity to his playing with contrasts ranging from stride to bebop, from spirituals to swing, Bill Mays is never at a loss for interesting pianistic statements. He evokes emotions which can move the listener to tears, to laughter, or to any other mood he creates. His sense of time and his inquisitive mind take him into depths of sounds so inventive that one wonders how he will find his way back to the point of origin. Not to worry. His musical journeys are at once fascinating and fulfilling.

He made the following comments about some of the songs on this CD:

Boardwalk Blues: "Recently, I was visiting my cousin, Pam and her husband Jim Day, lovely people, in Greenbrae, California (near San Francisco). They live on a houseboat near the Greenbrae Boardwalk. From the mixture of wide open spaces, marshland, a view of San Quentin Prison with its grey walls, a view of the Bay looking over a congested huge city, all of that together inspired Boardwalk Blues. I started it at their house on a piano that had belonged to me when I was a little kid. It's a minor blues in 3/4 time.

"**Thanksgiving Prayer** was also written for some friends of my wife Thalia and mine, Alfred and Joelle Kwiatek. I was feeling thankful for friendship in general and for them specifically.

"**Grandpa's Spells** by Jelly Roll Morton was written sometime in the teens at the beginning of this century. It's a total stride number.

"The **Nightingale** intro was just off the top of my head. I really don't plan those things out. I also did it in the key of E, which gave it a different sound.

"I like to include verses if they're worthy. The verse on **Guess I'll Hang My Tears Out to Dry**, though very short is a lovely one. I love Frank Sinatra's version of that.

"**Why Did I Choose You?** was sung at Thalia's and my wedding by Mark Murphy.

"**Never Let Me Go** is Thalia's and my song.

"**Jitterbug Waltz** by Fats Waller was one of the first jazz waltzes written. I just naturally fell into that boogie-woogie left-hand thing that I got into near the end of the song. It's a neat technique because the waltz is in 3/4 time and I superimpose the boogie-woogie pattern, which is in 4/4 time. I'm not sure how it sounds in the audience. Maybe people are wondering where "1" is!

"**I Wish I Knew** and **Lush Life** both have verses that I love.

"The audience at Maybeck is wonderful. They are up for it. They are very quiet and appreciative; the piano is excellent. The acoustics are just about perfect. All that wood. Boy," he concluded.

And all that Bill Mays. Boy!

JUDE HIBLER

Jazz Link Enterprises owner

Jazzscene of Oregon writer / photographer

Cadence

THE REVIEW OF JAZZ & BLUES: CREATIVE IMPROVISED MUSIC

APRIL 1994

(1) BILL MAYS, AT MAYBECK, CONCORD CCD-4567.

A Nightingale Sang In Berkeley Square / I Wish I Knew / Stompin' At The Savoy / Boardwalk Blues / Lush Life / I'm Confessin' / Guess I'll Hang My Tears Out To Dry / Jitterbug Waltz / Thanksgiving Prayer / Why Did I Choose You? / Never Let Me Go / Grandpa's Spells. 57-58.

Mays, p. Sept. 27, 1992, Berkeley, CA.

It is generally intriguing to hear post-bop pianists perform a solo set. Without the benefit of stride technique, modern pianists have to find alternative ways to make up for the lack of bass and drums, stating the chord structures without being weighed down by an oom-pah rhythm.

One of the most rewarding aspects of Concord's Maybeck Recital Hall series (which now numbers 29 volumes) is that it places so many pianists who one normally hears in a trio setting out on a stage unaccompanied. For every Dick Hyman and Dave McKenna (for whom solo sets are second nature) there is a Bill Mays who (as far as I know) had never recorded all alone before. Actually Mays excels on (1), mixing together traditional songs with a few more recent selections. His brilliant rendition of "A Nightingale Sang In Berkeley Square" (which starts and ends with a very impressionistic fantasy, making one wonder if its swinging middle section was indeed a dream) is most memorable, and it is fun to hear him exploring such tunes as "Stompin' At The Savoy," "I'm Confessin'" and a boogie-woogie filled "Jitterbug Waltz." A real surprise is Mays' run-through on Jelly Roll Morton's "Grandpa's Spells" even if, at 88 seconds, it is much too brief. Recommended.

--SCOTT YANOW



September 1993

Bill Mays shines on solo piano recording

Bill Mays at Maybeck, Vol. 26, Bill Mays, piano. Chalk up another top echelon performance in this never ending series of solo piano recitals. Mays broke the hearts of his West Coast following (including many musicians) by moving to New York several years ago. He returned west for this concert and wove a spell for the always attentive Maybeck audience. Some of my favorites: A Nightingale Sang In Berkeley Square (remember please that it's Berkeley as in Sir Charles not as in the bay area city); a Mays original called Boardwalk Blues with a theme-like quality to it; the ultimate test (Mays gets an "A") for pianists, Strayhorn's Lush Life; the rarely heard Guess I'll Hang My Tears Out To Dry with haunting verse intact; a romp through Fats Waller's Jitterbug Waltz and a medley of two tender beauties, Why Did I Choose You and Never Let Me Go. Mays strides his way out of Maybeck with Jelly Roll Morton's Grandpa's Spells, a little piece of perfection. Mays is one of a new breed of pianists: deep in the tradition and dedicated to it. This recording provides the evidence. **Concord Jazz, Playing Time 57:58. ★★★★★1/2.**

Ratings range from one to five stars,

By George Fendel