JAZZ PIANO FOR DANCERS & LISTENERS
The Bill Jackman Trio – Volume **2** of 6

1. Autumn Leaves (Latin, 10:15) by Joseph Kosma*
2. Satin Doll (swing, 10:18) by Duke Ellington, Billy Strayhorn, and Johnny Mercer
3. Polka Dots and Moonbeams (ballad, 10:25) by Jimmy Van Heusen
4. The Shadow of Your Smile (Latin, 9:20) by Johnny Mandel
5. Everything Happens to Me (ballad, 10:41) by Matt Dennis
6. All the Things You Are (swing, 8:46) by Jerome Kern
7. The Oakland Slow Blues (slow blues, 13.11) by Bill Jackman

Total Playing Time: 72 minutes, 56 seconds
* Only the composer(s) of the music are cited.

About the Tunes

1. Autumn Leaves (Latin, 10:15) by Joseph Kosma (1947)
"Autumn Leaves" has been part of classic American popular music for more than half a century. But it was originally a French song which quickly became an international hit after it was first sung by Yves Montand in a 1946 French film. However, its composer, Joseph Kosma, was not a native Frenchman. Rather he was a Hungarian Jew, who composed scores for Hungarian films in the late 1920s. With the rise of Nazism, he fled to France, where he worked as a café pianist and began a long association with the French poet Jacques Prevert and the French film director Jean Renoir. The latter left France for Hollywood during World War II. Kosma remained, but had to spend much of the time in hiding.

"Autumn Leaves" was introduced as a slow ballad, but most jazz musicians have done it as a swing tune (e.g., Miles Davis) and often at a fast tempo. Breaking with tradition, Bill's Trio does it Latin, at a solidly danceable cha-cha-cha tempo. The tune is in a minor key and has an uncommon structure: the first 8-bar section repeats once, but after that there are no repeats in the 32-bar tune. It is a very formful tune which Bill incorporates into his melodic improvisations. He employs a range of jazz piano modes to fully explore this classic. After working with single-note, right-hand lines, Bill changes to the hands-in-unison mode. He then takes a turn with first compact and then expanded "block chords." Bassist Terry follows with a dance-infused solo.

2. Satin Doll (swing, 10:18) by Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn (1958)
Duke Ellington is generally considered to be the most important composer in **jazz** history. But he is also among the top composers of classic American **popular** music. From the early 1930s on, Ellington composed hundreds of great tunes such as "Sophisticated Lady" (1933), "Prelude to a Kiss" (1938), "Don't Get Around Much Anymore" (1942), and "Come Sunday" (1946) which became part of classic American popular music.

Many of his tunes were jointly composed with his longtime collaborator Billy Strayhorn, who joined Ellington's band as arranger, composer, and second pianist around 1939-40.

Because "Satin Doll" has rich harmony, numerous key changes, and a structure that facilitates improvisation, many jazz musicians have recorded it. This makes it hard for jazz musicians who follow to do something new and interesting with the tune. However, Bill's Trio has unequivocally managed to do this. Before getting into the improvisations, Bill gives due respect to this great melody (the "head") with a nice arrangement in the rich, lower-middle region of the piano.

Then Bill begins to explore the tune's framework with single-note, right-hand lines. By the second chorus of improvisation, Bill is working with eighth-note triplets. (This is noteworthy because eighth-note triplets are under-utilized by most jazz pianists. One of a handful of other jazz pianists today who make significant use of eighth-note triplets is Billy Taylor.) Then Bill gets bluesey for a chorus before returning to make another statement with eighth-note triplets. Then it is "block chord" time a la George Shearing and Red Garland. Terry's bass solo is inventive even as he maintains a solid dance beat, which should keep the swing dancers happy. Bill plays the out chorus (the "head" out) in the upper region of the piano, which contrasts with his opening arrangement in the lower-middle region of the piano.

3. Polka Dots and Moonbeams (ballad, 10:25) by Jimmy Van Heusen (1940)
Although Jimmy Van Heusen doesn't have name recognition amongst the general public like George Gershwin, Cole Porter, and Hoagy Carmichael do, he certainly has it among jazz musicians, who continue to record the many great tunes he composed from the 1930s through the 1960s. His admirers have included Frank Sinatra who recorded "Polka Dots and Moonbeams" (first with Tommy Dorsey and His Orchestra) as well as virtually all of Van Heusen's songs. During Sinatra's era of live performances at the Sands in Las Vegas, Van Heusen's "Come Fly With Me" (1958) became Frank's signature tune. Van Heusen's music appeared in many films from the 1940s through the mid-1960s, and Sinatra starred in some of these films, such as the *The Tender Trap* (1955) with Debbie Reynolds, which introduced Van Heusen's tune "The Tender Trap."

Like Gershwin, Van Heusen made extensive use of the bass line in composing, as he did in "Polka Dots and Moonbeams." (To learn the composer's bass line is one of the main reasons why Bill has started the development of each tune in his jazz repertoire with the original sheet music, not a "fake book."*) The melody of this tune has a lot of movement, but in fact is anchored on a small number of essential notes that are close together. Bill employs these anchor notes to create new improvised melodies. This 32-bar tune has an AABA structure, with a beautiful bridge (i.e., the B section). Note on the bridge how Bill effectively melds his Bill Evans-style left-hand voicings into his jazz melody lines, thus adding body to the single-note line. Terry's bass solo is very melodic, with Bill playing complimentary counter-melodies based on the tune's essential notes.

(* "Fake" books are collections – sometimes illegal – of hundreds of tunes with just the single-line melody and the chord symbols. They do not have the composer's bass line.)

4. The Shadow of Your Smile (Latin, 9:20) by Johnny Mandel (1965)
This tune was the Love Theme from the 1965 film *The Sandpiper,* "An Adult Love Story." It starred Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton, with Charles Bronson co-starring, and was directed by Liza Minelli's late father, Vincente Minnelli. "The Shadow of Your Smile" was done as a slow ballad in the film. But ever since Bill heard jazz guitarist Wes Montgomery do this tune Latin, that's how he wanted to do it. The Trio does the tune with an infectious cha-cha-cha beat, great for dancing. Fittingly, Bill and Lupita selected this tune for one of the six on their dance video entitled *Dancing to Jazz.*

"The Shadow of Your Smile" has a minor feel throughout, although it ends in (resolves to) a major key. Given the tune's rich harmony (including interesting chord and key changes), "The Shadow of Your Smile" has really been under-recorded by jazz musicians. Bill's explanation for why this is so is that this tune was composed several decades after the classics of the 1930s and 1940s which became a mainstay of the repertoire of the Modern Jazz (Be-Bop) musicians of the 1950s. In the 1960s, jazz musicians, led by John Coltrane, were moving toward modal tunes, which were not based on chord changes like "The Shadow of Your Smile."

"The Shadow of Your Smile" is a formful tune, which is reflected in Bill's improvised melodies. Midway through his solo, Bill takes a chorus in the hands-in-unison mode, a tribute to Wes Montgomery's octave style. Bill ends his solo in the "two-fisted" full-piano mode. Then it's drummer Ron Marabuto's turn. With supportive accompaniment from Bill and Terry, Ron takes a creative solo, reflective of the melody of the tune.

5. Everything Happens to Me (ballad, 10:41) by Matt Dennis (1941)
Except for Duke Ellington, most of the composers whose music Bill recorded in this series of six CDs, were composers, rather than performers. A notable exception was Matt Dennis, who enjoyed a long career as a singer, pianist, and composer. (Born in February, 1913, he died in June 2002. Just a few years ago, Dennis was a guest on Marian McPartland's Piano Jazz show, where he sang and played the piano.) Dennis didn't write directly for Hollywood or Broadway and never got the kind of acclaim that composers for those destinations did. But he composed some of the outstanding songs of classic American popular music, including: "Violets For Your Fur" (1941), of which John Coltrane recorded a memorable version; "Angel Eyes" (1946); "Let's Get Away From It All" (1940); and "It's Over, It's Over, It's Over" (1960).

"Everything Happens to Me" was introduced by Tommy Dorsey and His Orchestra, with vocals by Frank Sinatra. It is a 32-bar AABA tune, but the harmonies of the A and B sections are markedly different. The bridge (the B section) has more conventional ("circle of fifths") harmony , with a four-bar melody section that repeats with variations after a key change (modulation). The A section, in contrast, moves almost chromatically, which means you can't play for 4 bars in a given tonality like you can in the B section.

The melody of this tune, like that of "The Shadow of Your Smile," has a lot of movement, but is anchored on a small number of essential notes that are close together.

Listen to how Bill bases his melodic inventions on these essential notes. The chromatic-like movement of the A section presents a challenge to playing "double-time" (i.e., 16th-note) lines, which Bill rises to admirably. Terry, as usual, takes a very melodic bass solo, with Bill playing complimentary counter-melodies that reflect the tune's essential notes and Ron providing sensitive and steady backing.

6. All the Things You Are (swing, 8:46) by Jerome Kern (1939)

Born in New York in 1885, Jerome Kern is one the most distinguished composers of classic American popular music. His most important work occurred early in his career, the 1927 musical play *Show Boat,* for which he wrote the music and Oscar Hammerstein II wrote the lyrics. Songs from this work include: "Ol' Man River," "Can't Help Lovin' Data Man," and "Why Do I Love You?"

Kern was active writing for films in the 1930s. His classic tune "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes" appeared the 1935 film *Roberta,* and "A Fine Romance" and "The Way you Look Tonight" were featured in *Swing Time* (1936) which starred Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. Kern composed "All the Things You Are" for the musical comedy *Very Warm For May,* which failed on Broadway. After this, he moved to Hollywood, where he wrote for films, producing some of his most sophisticated tunes including: "Lady Be Good" (1941) for the film *The Last Time I Saw Paris;* "Dearly Beloved," "I'm Old Fashioned," and "You Were Never Lovelier" for *You Were Never Lovelier* (1942); and "Long Ago and Far Away" for *Cover Girl* (1944). Kern died suddenly in 1945 in New York where he had gone for a revival of *Show Boat.*

"All the Things You Are" has been a favorite of jazz musicians since the BeBop era. In fact, the BeBop musicians composed their own tunes based on "All the Things You Are." The tune offers an excellent framework for improvisation: it has a logical structure; it changes keys (modulates) almost every four measures; and its harmony is circle-of-fifths based, which facilitates improvisation. Its structure is fascinating, both resembling and differing from the common 32-bar AABA form. The second A section is in a different key than the first A section, rare for the AABA form, and the last A section has 12 rather than 8 measures, making for a 36-bar tune.

The tune is very formful, and Bill's improvisations reflect this form. After exploring the tune with single-note, right-hand lines, Bill shifts to the hands-in-unison mode for contrast. This technique, which exploits the power of octaves, was perfected by Wes Montgomery on the guitar (i.e., playing in octaves) and Phineas Newborn Jr. on the piano. In this mode, chords are not played, but the harmony is implied by the piano and bass lines. Then for further contrast, Bill shifts to the "block chord" mode, first playing locked-hands "block chords" a la George Shearing and then full-piano "block chords" a la Red Garland. Bassist Terry loves this tune and takes an inventive solo, with sensitive accompaniment from Bill and Ron.

7. The Oakland Slow Blues (slow blues, 13.11) by Bill Jackman (1997)

Bill composed this tune after he returned to Oakland, California from Colorado, where he studied for his doctorate. Since he was now back in Oakland and this slow blues tune he

was hearing felt like Oakland, he named it "The Oakland Slow Blues." (The year given above is the copyright year. Bill is an Oakland native and a graduate of Oakland High School.)

On the introduction and the "head" (i.e., the original melody), Ron carries the beat, as Terry and Bill play bass figures in unison. Then come the improvised choruses, and Terry starts steady walking his bass. On the first few choruses, Bill plays simple, spare melodies in the single-line right-hand mode. Then he proceeds to get funky, with growing funkiness on succeeding choruses. Finally, Bill shifts to big full-piano, Red Garland style "block chords," creating elegant and swinging blues melodies.

All the while Terry has been steady walking his bass, but now he is ready for some serious soloing. Check out his soulful and melodic solo, with simpatico accompaniment from Ron and Bill. On successive choruses, Bill moves his accompaniment from the lower-middle, to the upper-middle, and then to the upper region of the piano, lending different colors to Terry's heartfelt solo.

LUPITA LOPEZ JACKMAN