

Bill Charlap - Rolling Stone Original (2005)

Written by bluesever

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01. Somebody Loves Me 02. S' Wonderful 03. A Foggy Day 04. I Was So Young (You Were So Beautiful) Bill Charlap - piano

Bill Charlap is one of the strongest mainstream jazz pianists on the scene and one of the most gifted interpreters of standards. He grew up in a musical household, as the son of Broadway songwriter Moose Charlap and singer Sandy Stewart. Taking to the piano at a young age, he went on to study at New York's High School of Performing Arts. He then entered college, but rather than finishing, opted to practice and gig on his own. Pianist Bill Mays soon took up Charlap's cause, recommending the young man as his replacement in the Gerry Mulligan Quartet. During this time, Charlap also worked with Benny Carter, Clark Terry, and Frank Wess, and was sought after as an accompanist for singers such as Tony Bennett, Carol Sloane, and Sheila Jordan. In 1995, he secured one of the most coveted piano chairs in jazz, with the Phil Woods Quintet.

All the while, Charlap showed steady development as a leader. His debut came in 1994 with *Along with Me*, followed by *Souvenir* in 1995 and *Distant Star* in 1996. His 1997 release, *All Through the Night*, was the first to feature his current trio, with the redoubtable (and unrelated) Washingtons, Peter and Kenny, on bass and drums respectively. In 2000, this lineup had its major-label breakthrough with the highly acclaimed Blue Note disc *Written in the Stars*. Two albums appeared in 2001: *2Gether* with Warren Vaché and *Contrasts* with Jon Gordon. *'S Wonderful* hit the shelves in 2002, as did *Stardust*, which began a series of albums that focused on a single composer. *Stardust* featured the music of Hoagy Carmichael, 2004's *Somewhere* was an all-Leonard Bernstein affair, while 2005's *Plays George Gershwin* featured ten songs by the man Charlap considers "the American soul." 2005 saw the release of an album with Sandy Stewart, *Love Is Here to Stay*. Two years later, Charlap released *Live at the Village Vanguard*.
---David R. Adler, Rovi

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