

BILL CARROTHERS • I LOVE PARIS

BILL CARROTHERS: PIANO

NICOLAS THYS: BASS

DRÉ PALLEMAERTS: DRUMS

Three masters of subtle beauty: The latest CD by pianist Bill Carrother's trio

Recordings that reveal new facets each time you listen: That is how American pianist Bill Carrothers has distinguished himself amongst experts. Despite various noted awards such as the "Deutscher Schallplattenpreis" and the French "Diapason d'Or", the jazz musician, who comes from Minneapolis and spent several years in New York after finally settling down in Michigan, is still an insiders' tip. He collaborated with celebrities like Lee Konitz, Buddy De Franco, Dave Douglas or Bennie Wallace and he is appreciated and admired by the big names in New York's jazz scene. He is an exceptionally introverted musician, but gifted with an enormous potential of overtones, soft nuances and delicate shades of color. This is distinctively and with ample variations shown in the trio's production.

Bill Carrothers and his partners Nicolas Thys on bass and Dré Pallemmaerts on drums have chosen standards for this CD. But apart from some few, these songs are scarcely played songs from the "Great American Songbook". A character of its own does not only apply to the selection, but even more to the way these tunes are interpreted: The trio's style is far from any showmanship. The records are quiet highlights of under-statement. And they possess a rare quality of making you more curious the more you listen to them. Step by step, soft and subtle beauties present themselves.

Bill Carrothers is a master of time: This becomes evident, when the first sounds of the CD ring out a subtly reversed introduction to "Beyond The Blue Horizon". How uncommon Carrother's handling of harmonies is, is noticeable in all of the songs, particularly in the slow ones, such as "I Apologize" and "Sleep Warm" at the end of the album. Cole Porter's Evergreen "I Love Paris", the most popular song, plays an important role. Carrothers creates a raptly hovering atmosphere, full of crystal-clear harmonies and soft timbres he lets appear in an entirely new light within seconds. Before the song quietly fades away at the end, a shrewd, incessantly growing intensity develops, both pressing and at the same time laid-back: A highly refined crescendo of passion.



The trio's interpretations are all works of art of delicate shading. "Brother, Can You Spare A Dime?", this classic of the American Depression, which has been interpreted from the days of Bing Crosby up to George Michael's, comes along in a melancholy inebriated slow motion, leading to gloomily urging chords and evoking a picture of stifling stagnation. Using unexpected rhythmical dashes or minimal harmonic details, Carrothers adds a special touch to tunes that appear to be swinging coolly at first impression, such as "Button Up Your Overcoat" or "It's A Blue World".

Taking all that into consideration, it is amazing how closely this trio interacts. Nicolas Thys and Dré Pallemarts are not only companions, but integral components in this musical structure. Their play literally merges with Carrothers', showing high class in its unobtrusive elegance. There are hardly any comrades-in-arms that would go together better with the introverted expert Bill Carrothers. What a self-contained and finely nuanced and tuned togetherness is taking place, you can hear and feel in every single chord of the CD. This is even more fascinating, the more often you put it on. You are bound to discover new details again and again.





BILL CARROTHERS – I Love Paris

★★★★★ **Jazzzeitung** (Germany) - *July 2005*

★★★★★ **Jazz'n'More** (Switzerland) - *June 2005*

★★★★★ **JazzMan** (France) - *June 2005*

★★★★★ **Jazzthetik** (Germany) - *March 2005*



BILL CARROTHERS

I Love Paris

Bill Carrothers (p), Nicolas Thys (b) and Dré Pallemmaerts (dr).

★★★★ A detour is worthwhile

This recording which is more improvised than the „1918 Armistice“ CD which the Artist had issued under the last Label Sketch, nonetheless shows a certain continuity: the pianist, Bill Carrothers, lets himself be carried away by the mood of old songs from the Twenties to the Forties which still enthuse him. The nostalgic note which is almost similar to old photography endows an innocent charm on this sentimental stroll through past times. Listeners are able to see the spirit of the young girls from the old silent films trembling with fear and who seem to blush all over when Charlot caresses them despite the black and white recordings. When hearing the innocent melodies of the American pianist, it is easy to think that one can see the girls jumping directly through the spring air. This music is never artificial in its freshness, however and is able to produce striking pieces of music which are initially harmless (Brother Can You Spare a Dime) but which also produce a dark and heavy feeling or even sudden sadness and consternation: the song „I Love Paris“ is not only the most conceivably charming postcard welcome by Cole Porter but it is also a series of dramatic and guarded arrangements accompanied by the vibrating sounds of the subdued drumming episode of Dré Pallemmaerts. The modernity of the pianist is revealed for all to see here: this repertoire is not a reproduction but more of a newly composed recollection in which unforgettable melodies such as „Blame It On My Youth“ and „Moonlight Serenade“ (amongst others) overlap each other and create a completely unprecedented harmonious poetry.

Yvan Amar

JazzMan – June 2005





Bill Carrothers - I Love Paris

Bill Carrothers (p), Nicolas Thys (b), Dré Pallemmaerts (dr)

★★★★

In 2004, Pianist Bill Carrothers met with a lot of criticism on the Top Ten List with his album „Armistice 1918“. With „I Love Paris“, he has now selected nine tunes from the Twenties and Forties, some of which are known („My Foolish Heart“) and others are less well known. Playing and experimenting friends turn the album into an absolute listening pleasure. He shrinks away from no risks and shows how serious and stimulating music can be achieved with humour. The record sounds temporary and it is easily forgotten that compositions from the last century are involved. Carrothers brings a repeated smile, as, for example, his citation from Glenn Miller’s „Moonlight Serenade“ and “Moon Love“. The bassist Nicolas Thys and drummer Dré Pallemmaerts support the pianist in an absolutely exemplary manner. „I Love Paris“ is definitely a record which stimulates it being heard time and time again.

ps

Jazz’N’More (Switzerland) – June 2005





Bill Carrothers

I Love Paris

Pirouet PIT 3012

★★★★★

A seldomly delicate piano-trio CD! In addition to the title piece, there are nine true examples of enraptured trio-culture which are not frequently played from the Standards of the Great American Songbook such as „Brother, Can You Spare A Dime“, „It’s A Blue World“, „I Apologize“ and „Sleep Warm“. The subtle contrary features of the introduction to the first track „Beyond The Blue Horizon“ is a programmatic finesse. Bill Carrothers, p, Nicolas Thys, b, and Dré Pallemmaerts, dr, are now bring what Bill Evan’s Trio commenced at the end of the Fifties, namely lyrical beauty and fine improvisations, deft miniatures and wonderful melodies, simultaneously intellectual and sensitive alike and delicate and enchanting. Controlled passion and a quiet glowing intensity which is not least reflected in detailed and refined communication.

Dr. Tobias Böcker – Jazzzeitung July 2005





Bill Carrothers **I Love Paris**

Bill Carrothers: p / Nicolas Thys: b / Dré Pallemmaerts: dr

Beyond The Blue Horizon / Brother, Can You Spare A Dime / Button Up Your Overcoat /
Stars Fell on Alabama / I Love Paris / Its a Blue World / I Apologize / Moon Love / Sleep Warm
Recording: May 2004 Production: Pirouet Length: 64:06 Pirouet / H'Art

★★★★

Bill Carrothers plays differently from other pianists but it is difficult to determine why. His individualistic adornments? His different moods? His emphasis on middle parts which would otherwise only be heard as sound shadows below the melody line? The American pianist who has already worked with Lee Konitz, Bennie Wallace and Dave Douglas and who nonetheless always remains a proverbial secret tip seems to have checked out all the nuances of each of the 88 keys. Touché, the striking culture and dynamism are parameters which are perfectly mastered by Carrothers. His arrangements of individual pieces, in certain cases unknown titles of the Great American Songbook, possess a brittle charm which calls on listeners to particulate as well. Anyone who wants to delight in the full beauty has to delve into the music and go on a so-called discovery journey. Above all, Carrothers' interplay with his Belgian rhythm group is uncommonly exciting with Nic Thys on the bass and Dré Pallemmaerts on the drums. Both of them are far more than accompaniments - they integrate, give impulses and are worthy soloists in themselves. Above all, Pallemmaerts' work on the cymbals is worth an extra hearing in itself. „I Love Paris“, the title piece, works with sound colors, feeling fluctuations, moods and dynamic nuances and shades. In the final tact, Bill Carrothers summarizes his musical world once again: striving forwards and simultaneously reticent and so closely interlinked that one can always hear something new.

Angela Ballhorn – *Jazzthetik*, March 2005





I Love Paris

Bill Carrothers | Pirouet

By John Kelman

One great thing about jazz is that an artist is more likely to be measured by his or her career arc, rather than the success or failure of a single release. It also means that, when an artist releases a career-defining record, subsequent releases are less likely to be measured against it. Instead, they are seen within the broader context of the artist's larger body of work.

Take pianist Bill Carrothers, whose *Armistice 1918* found its way onto many a reviewer's 2004 top ten list. An ambitious work that integrated Carrothers' not inconsiderable musical talents with his interest in history, the sprawling two-disc release also raised the bar for integrating visual arts with music—the packaging of the disc by Philippe Ghielmetti of the sadly now-defunct Sketch Records was as beautiful as the music's narrative was vivid and poignant. That an artist like Carrothers could create such a powerful and moving piece of work at such a relatively early stage in his career clearly portended greater things to come.

If *Armistice 1918* were a rock record, the industry would be looking for his next step to be even bigger. Thankfully the jazz world is less driven by such concerns. While Carrothers' followup, *I Love Paris*, may not have the kind of grand ambition of *Armistice 1918*, it's every bit as compelling—just in a smaller, more intimate way. Moving ahead in time from the music of the First World War, Carrothers brings together nine tracks from the 1920s through 1940s; some familiar, like Cole Porter's title track, others less well-known by name, but — like some of the music on *Armistice 1918*—such a part of the larger collective unconscious that one recognizes them without actually knowing them. And, true to form, Carrothers manages to show just how far you can stretch the mainstream while still remaining within its general boundaries.

Carrothers is a harmony-rich player with an uncanny ability to see the greater potential of both hands in concert. While some pianists are fairly linear with their right hand and eke out accompaniment with their left—and there are times when Carrothers is more linear — he has a vivid sense of larger voicings, like British pianist John Taylor, sometimes creating eight- and nine-part harmonies that move smoothly, and in ways that makes every subsequent note feel perfectly logical, yet somehow unpredictable.

Bassist Nicolas Thy and drummer Dré Pallemmaerts are intuitive players, supporting Carrothers as much as pushing him into areas of further possibility. While an underlying sense of swing pervades the entire set, the trio also takes more liberties; the title track and “Moon Love” serve as examples of how familiar tunes can be re-imagined—recognizable yes, but undeniably new as well.

With a gradually growing and significant body of work, Carrothers is clearly an artist to keep an eye on, and *I Love Paris* is another fine addition that skirts the mainstream while providing plenty of surprises for the more adventurous at heart.

All About Jazz.com • 2005

