



Kind Of Blue: The Making Of The Miles Davis Masterpiece

By Ashley Kahn

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Jazz musicians call it The Bible. Critics call it the one jazz album every fan must own. Forty-one years since its recording in 1959, it has sold millions worldwide and sits near the top of any list of most important records of the century. How did two impromptu sessions produce such a timeless acknowledged masterpiece? Now, for the first time, Ashley Kahn takes us into the studio to witness the creation of an album that still thrills jazz musicians, enthusiasts, and newcomers alike with its deceptively simple tunes. Using eyewitness accounts and newly discovered documents, Kahn traces Miles's move from bop to modal jazz, re-creates the sessions using master tapes (weighing in on fragmentary takes and the dispute about composers), and follows the rise of the album from its contemporary reception to its transformation into a cultural landmark through conversations with those who were there. Extensively researched and copiously illustrated, *Kind of Blue* recovers an invaluable piece of musical history and heightens fans' appreciation of the album they know and love. New and never-before-published material in *Kind of Blue* includes: The complete, unedited master session tapes, with analysis of fragmentary takes that have never been released, and studio dialogue between Davis and the musicians. Over forty new interviews with musicians, producers, and critics, including Herbie Hancock, Elvin Jones, Quincy Troupe, George Avakian, Nat Hentoff—and the only people still living who witnessed the making of the album: Jimmy Cobb, engineer Bob Waller, and photographer Don Hunstein. Previously unpublished photos of the recording session, featuring a rare shot of Miles's charts. Studio logs and internal memos from Columbia about the making and marketing of the album. The handwritten version of Bill Evans's famous liner notes.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Classic jazz's bestselling album ever, *Kind of Blue*, is at once a beacon to nascent jazz fans and a pillar of professionals' listening repertoires. Its immense sales figures confirm its place in music history's annals, and its musical significance still impacts artists. In this close-up look at the story behind the 1959 album, Kahn (VH1's music editor) digs through photographs, sheet music, interviews and studio recordings to present a truly impressive tribute. He begins by setting the scene: in the late 1950s, jazz had already seen various styles, from swing to hard bop. Trumpeter Miles Davis, influential even before *Kind of Blue*, was a respected musician who could easily pull together jazz's best talent. His team on *Blue* consisted of alto saxophonist Cannonball Adderly, tenor saxophonist John Coltrane, pianist Bill Evans (with Wynton Kelly filling in on one tune), bassist Paul Chambers and drummer Jimmy Cobb. Whether or not they knew the two days spent in New York's 30th Street Studio would be so affecting, the musicians labored over the album with poise and dedication. Kahn transcribes revealing conversations between takes, relaying Davis's quips on rhythm and feel. The album is recognized as a groundbreaking piece that defined modal jazz, characterized by longer solos and slower tempo, with the haunting "So What" leading the pack in terms of recognition and emulation. The other tracks, especially "Blue in Green" and "All Blues," embody the album's moody, trance-like feel, and Kahn's insightful interpretation will propel veterans to reexamine the music they've been listening to for years. 64 b&w photos. (Oct.)

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From *Booklist*

Da Capo has been well known as an excellent press for reissuing classic jazz books and for publishing notable foreign jazz titles, such as Francis Paudras' excellent *Dance of the Infidels* (1998), on the author's relationship with legendary jazz pianist Bud Powell, which was the springboard for Bertrand Tavernier's remarkable film, *'Round Midnight*. Recently Da Capo was acquired by the protean Perseus Group (its publishing companies include PublicAffairs, Counterpoint, and Basic Books), and Da Capo's new catalog features quite a number of promising projects. *Kind of Blue*, also the title of the groundbreaking jazz album, leads the list. In writing about the production of that classic album, Kahn necessarily writes about the making of one of the sexiest jazz musicians of all times, the epitome of cool--Miles Davis. Miles' dark, brooding good looks, Mr. Heathcliff of the improvisational world, were made to be packaged. Fortunately, Miles had a bit of talent and the sense to surround himself with musicians possessing lots of talent to accompany all his cool. To let Miles tell it, "I was playing my horn and leading the baddest band in the business, a band that was creative, imaginative, supremely tight and artistic." Incidentally, the band on *Blue* was Coltrane, Cannonball Adderley, Bill Evans (and Wynton Kelly), Paul Chambers, and Jimmy Cobb. So Kahn breezes through this exciting discussion of the appearance and the significance of *Kind of Blue* it being the definitive introduction of modal jazz, the next step in the evolution of jazz following bebop. He's pushed along by the interpolations of quotes from musicians, record industry personnel, critics, friends, and relatives; and by vignettes, such as on the history of Columbia Records and the one about Fred Tolbert (aka Freddie the Freeloader). Kahn reports that the record *Kind of Blue* has sold millions worldwide and sells briskly, "averaging 5,000 copies a week," today. That aside, with the enthusiasm of a jazz fanatic, this is a great tribute and a fine book. *Bonnie Smothers*

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Review

"If ever a recording deserved book length praise, [this] is it... celebrates the famed album with a big, wet

kiss." - *Phoenix New Times*

"Kahn does an extraordinary job of taking us back to the 1959 sessions ...wonderfully illustrated... a wealth of vintage photos." -- *Billboard, August 12, 2000*

"Kicks off like a good mystery. And it's the mystery that lifts Blue beyond traditional biography..." -- *USA Today*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Archie Beard:

This Kind Of Blue: The Making Of The Miles Davis Masterpiece book is just not ordinary book, you have it then the world is in your hands. The benefit you obtain by reading this book will be information inside this reserve incredible fresh, you will get info which is getting deeper you actually read a lot of information you will get. This particular Kind Of Blue: The Making Of The Miles Davis Masterpiece without we realize teach the one who reading through it become critical in thinking and analyzing. Don't possibly be worry Kind Of Blue: The Making Of The Miles Davis Masterpiece can bring whenever you are and not make your case space or bookshelves' come to be full because you can have it in the lovely laptop even mobile phone. This Kind Of Blue: The Making Of The Miles Davis Masterpiece having very good arrangement in word as well as layout, so you will not experience uninterested in reading.

Betty Norsworthy:

This book untitled Kind Of Blue: The Making Of The Miles Davis Masterpiece to be one of several books that will best seller in this year, that's because when you read this guide you can get a lot of benefit in it. You will easily to buy that book in the book retail outlet or you can order it by using online. The publisher of this book sells the e-book too. It makes you more easily to read this book, because you can read this book in your Smart phone. So there is no reason to you to past this e-book from your list.

Michael Patterson:

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Debbie Yarborough:

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