

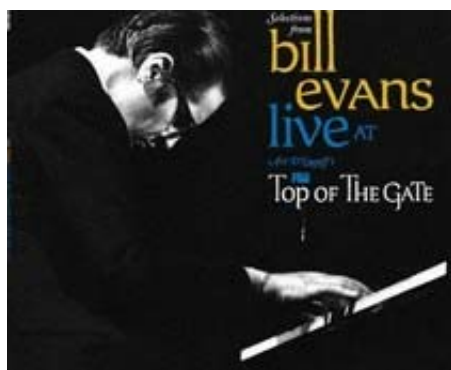
# Resonance Records finds buried treasure of Bill Evans Trio from 1968

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Recorded in 1968, but fresh as today.  
Photo credit: courtesy of Resonance Records

Rating for Jazz CD "Bill Evans Live at Art D'Lugoff's Top of the Gate":

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What a year it's been for [Resonance Records](#) (<http://resonancerecords.org/>)! First, a release of heretofore unknown [Wes Montgomery](http://www.wesmontgomery.com/) (<http://www.wesmontgomery.com/>) cuts, and now this: Newly found live recordings of the [Bill Evans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill_Evans) ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill\\_Evans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill_Evans)) Trio, 1968 vintage. The venue for this two-disc live recording was [Art D'Lugoff](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Art_D'Lugoff) ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Art\\_D'Lugoff](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Art_D'Lugoff))'s [Top of the Gate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Village_Gate) ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Village\\_Gate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Village_Gate)), the upstairs performance space of the [Village Gate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Village_Gate) ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Village\\_Gate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Village_Gate)) nightclub, which hosted approximately twenty other live jazz albums over its 35-year existence. The building now houses a [CVS Pharmacy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CVS_Pharmacy) ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CVS\\_Pharmacy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CVS_Pharmacy)), just as Denver's great [Rainbow Music Hall](http://www.setlist.fm/venue/rainbow-music-hall-denver-co-usa-1bd63d30.html?page=5) (<http://www.setlist.fm/venue/rainbow-music-hall-denver-co-usa-1bd63d30.html?page=5>) building is now home to a [Walgreens](http://www.walgreens.com/) (<http://www.walgreens.com/>).

Let's talk about the music, shall we? Anyone who is familiar with the work of Bill Evans knows that his harmonic language was as innovative as any musician of his time. His fellow musicians in the Trio are well-matched and intriguing. Happily, the stereo mix finds the piano in the middle, drums in the left channel, and bass in the right. Hearing the individual parts of the Trio is no problem, especially when listening with headphones.

Bassist [Eddie Gomez](http://eddiegomez.com/) (<http://eddiegomez.com/>), 24, was a true prodigy who spent eleven years in the Evans Trio. Technically astonishing, Gomez uses [double stops](http://www.thefreedictionary.com/double-stop) (<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/double-stop>) even while playing a [walking bassline](#)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bassline#Walking\\_bass](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bassline#Walking_bass)). He showed that he still had that technique this past March at a two-night stay at [Dazzle \(http://www.dazzlejazz.com/\)](http://www.dazzlejazz.com/), right here in Denver. (Readers, see what you've been missing?)

Drummer [Marty Morell \(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marty\\_Morell\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marty_Morell) was with the Evans Trio for seven years, longer than any other drummer. For most of this album, Morell plays brushes, despite Evans' up-tempo approach for most of the tunes. He does switch to sticks when the pianist is really wailing. It seems his motto is "the right tool for the right job."

The Trio plays two sets on this release; one set for each disc.

Despite Evans' reputation for repetition as his career moved on, he only reprises three songs from the first set on the second one. It's instructive to note the replayed songs: First is "Emily", a waltz-time ballad with an interesting melody, tickling Evans' penchant for inner-voice movement that seems to plant the seeds of a countermelody.

In the second set, Evans starts to play the chords of "Here's That Rainy Day," then switches to "Emily," providing the listener with a bit of a puzzle; simple miscue, or is more involved?.

Second is the bop ballad classic "Round Midnight". [Monk \(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thelonious\\_Monk\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thelonious_Monk)'s tune provides the kind of harmonic challenge that gets the adventurous slaving.

Evans hews to the line set forth by [Miles Davis \(http://www.milesdavis.com/\)](http://www.milesdavis.com/)' arrangement (or, more properly, [Gil Evans \(http://www.gilevans.com/\)](http://www.gilevans.com/)' arrangement, if legend is to be given credence), with the climactic middle section that gives birth to the doubled tempo solo of the second soloist.

Third comes "Yesterdays", a ballad covered by everyone from [Barbra Streisand \(http://www.barbrastreisand.com/\)](http://www.barbrastreisand.com/) to [Sun Ra \(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sun\\_Ra\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sun_Ra). At times, Bill Evans' propensity for harmonic and melodic perfectionism could devolve into an almost clinical approach, devoid of aestheticism. But on this night, both turns at the tune are bursting with lyrical fervor. All the other tunes on the set list can be properly described as "the usual suspects." The performances cannot be dismissed with such glib phraseology.

That leaves it to us, as listeners, to thank the hardworking folks at Resonance Records for the bounty in which we partake on *Bill Evans Live at Art D'Lugoff's Top of the Gate*. Buy it at [Twist and Shout \(http://www.twistandshout.com/\)](http://www.twistandshout.com/), still Denver's best independent

record store. Get off your duff and go to a show at Dazzle. It's a great place to hear great music. And you may get to hear some of today's great jazz stars play like the Bill Evans Trio does on this happily discovered buried treasure.

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Report



**Rob Johnson**, Denver Jazz Music Examiner

Rob Johnson has been a passionate jazz fan since his teens. He is friendly with most of Denver's top jazz musicians; saxist Keith Oxman dedicated the song "Comrade RJ" on his CD "Caught Between the Lion and the Twins" to him. He brings an encyclopedic knowledge of jazz history coupled with a...