

# The

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# Beat

## Sonic Portrait of Evans in '68

In Eddie Gomez's 11 years as the bassist with the Bill Evans Trio, several drummers cycled through the group's ranks—among them Joe Hunt, Arnie Wise, Philly Joe Jones, Marty Morell and Eliot Zigmund. Each contributed to the iconic trio. But Jack DeJohnette, who held the drum chair for six months in 1968, was something else again.

"He wasn't exactly a natural fit," Gomez said. "But that's what I thought made him perfect. There was a kind of unspoken definition of what a Bill Evans Trio drummer should play like, and Jack came in with what he wanted to do with a trio.

"It was sort of like a counterpoint to what Bill was doing, and that's the way I approach what I do. It made Bill think a bit more out of the box. He was engaged between Jack and myself. It was good for Bill and the trio; it gave us a spark that was right at the time."

That spark glows brightly on the latest collection of unearthed gems from Resonance, *Another Time: The Hilversum Concert*. Produced from recently uncovered tapes recorded before a live audience on June 22, 1968, at Netherlands Radio Union VARA Studio 8, the collection, one of only three known recordings of the Evans trio with DeJohnette, is notable for the intensity of the onstage interaction and the urgency of Evans' playing.

"He was reaching for things," DeJohnette said. "I think this captures it pretty good."

The album includes nine tunes—most of which were central to the trio's repertory, from popular standards like "Emily" and "Alfie," to the Evans original "Very Early," to the Miles Davis perennial "Nardis." Throughout, Evans' crystalline sound, reproduced with great fidelity, rings true. The arrangements, honed on the bandstand to geometric perfection, are familiar.



Eddie Gomez (left), Jack DeJohnette and Bill Evans play on *Another Time: The Hilversum Concert*, which was recorded in 1968.

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So too is the sense of autonomy afforded the bass and drums.

"It was a tradition of freeing up the section," DeJohnette said.

That tradition constituted an innovation when, in the late 1950s, Scott LaFaro emancipated the bass from slavish adherence to a walking function in the Evans trio with Paul Motian on drums. Chuck Israels expanded the bassist's role further; Gomez, who joined Evans in 1966, further yet. And with DeJohnette surging behind the trap set, the envelope was pushed into territory that was positively liberating.

The trio's collective voice is heard to most impressive effect on the album's longest track, the 8½-minute "Nardis." Compared with Evans' understated take on the tune earlier in his career—one documented on 1961's *Explorations* (Riverside)—the treatment on *Another Time*

comes off as a striking, if no less subtle, swirl of countervailing forces. That the level of interplay was mirrored in appearances at Ronnie Scott's in London and the Montreux Jazz Festival—both around the time of the Hilversum recording—suggests that *Another Time* documents Evans' mindset as it was evolving.

The evolution, Gomez explained, reflected in part Evans' reaction to the tumult of the era. Though Evans' revolution had been a quiet one, he was sensitive to the roiling of the world around him.

"The '60s was a time of change," Gomez said. "You might not look at Bill's trio as a sign of that, but this trio—with Jack in it—is an interesting look from that point of view. It wasn't like listening to Cecil Taylor or early Herbie Hancock. But within Bill's world, there was something that was sort of simmering."  
—Phillip Lutz