



# SOPHISTICATED LADY

Jazz Quartet



Volume I

exaSound  
DSD



YARLUNG RECORDS  
BOB ATTIYEH, PRODUCER

Vol. I

- |                                                                    |      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 1 <i>I'm Old Fashioned</i>                                         | 7:46 |
| Jerome Kern                                                        |      |
| 2 <i>Isfahan</i>                                                   | 6:38 |
| Duke Ellington & Billy Strayhorn                                   |      |
| 3 <i>For Andrew</i>                                                | 5:20 |
| Sophisticated Lady improvisation<br>melody kernel by Andrew Norman |      |
| 4 <i>Ropes of Sand</i>                                             | 7:10 |
| Misha Bigos                                                        |      |
| 5 <i>Strange Fruit</i>                                             | 4:52 |
| Abel Meeropol                                                      |      |

Vol. II

- |                                 |      |
|---------------------------------|------|
| 1 <i>Gone</i>                   | 2:33 |
| Andrew Boyle                    |      |
| commissioned by Yarlung Artists |      |
| 2 <i>Finale</i>                 | 5:38 |
| Misha Bigos                     |      |
| 3 <i>Night Night</i>            | 5:53 |
| Gary Wicks                      |      |
| 4 <i>Sophisticated Lady</i>     | 4:54 |
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| 5 <i>Weightless</i>             | 5:31 |
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| Misha Bigos                     |      |



## The Collaboration

It was our friend the music critic David W. Robinson who twisted my arm into the DSD realm. Our success with Yarlung's Single, Double and Quad DSD releases is "all his fault." For which we are grateful. David loaned me his Hapi and Pyramix software from Merging Technologies in Switzerland to make these transfers from analog tape. Thank you David. Recording legend Tom Caulfield helped me set up the Pyramix system and then cut our recordings into tracks and added the metadata for our releases on NativeDSD.com. Working with Tom, and his cohorts Jared and Jonas Sacks at NativeDSD has been a pleasure, and the Merging Technologies system worked flawlessly without ever once requiring a reboot during our weeks of transfers. All three of them, Tom, Jared and Jonas, were tirelessly patient with this old-fashioned vacuum tube and analog tape guy (me) as we transferred the SonoruS Series of analog tapes to Quad DSD for these releases.

Many audiophiles believe that Quad DSD is the finest medium to deliver great music on the planet. Given what we have heard it is hard to argue with them. Recording music to Quad DSD is one thing, but playing it back is another much more difficult process. The circuitry and design aesthetic required to take the super high resolution DSD files and deliver them as living and breathing music takes enormous skill and care. For this most important and delicate step we are especially grateful to George Klissarov. It is his musical aesthetic and from-the-ground-up engineering that enabled him to create the exaSound e22, which must be one of the finest Quad DSD and high resolution PCM digital to analog converters on the planet. exaSound also makes the e28 multichannel DAC for surround sound but Yarlung remains a "purist stereo household" and it is the e22 we know and love. Not only is it small and easy to use, but it is intensely musical, such that one marvels at the quality of the music performance and has the luxury of forgetting that one is listening to a digital stream rather than living and breathing musicians performing for you in your listening room. This is magic, but the magic comes not from tricks but from superb engineering. We are honored to collaborate with George and exaSound to bring you this first Yarlung quartet of DSD releases. Learn more about exaSound at [exasound.com](http://exasound.com)

Famed audiophile critic Brian Moura, who first introduced us to George at exaSound, wrote this to me:

**exaSound has been an early leader in providing Direct Stream Digital (DSD) playback in their DACs. This includes the first DAC for the consumer market that provided both Stereo and Multichannel playback at resolutions up to Quad DSD (11.2 MHz) – 4 times the resolution level offered by the Super Audio CD (SACD). exaSound is also noted for their responsive customer service and custom software drivers that support Windows, Mac and soon Windows Server and Linux. It's no surprise that they continue to win new customers with their products.**

David W. Robinson writes extensively for Postive Feedback Online, for which he is also the publisher and Editor-in-Chief. Like Brian Moura, David is known as “The Mountain” for his knowledge and experience with high resolution playback. David sent me this description of exaSound:

**Over the past several years, I have gotten to evaluate a number of DACs with DSD capabilities. Each has its own set of strengths, and a few weaknesses, which is only to be expected. But the exceptional work of George Klissarov and exaSound in their e22 and e28 DSD DACs is truly noteworthy -- in every sense of that word. The combination of ease, naturalness, harmonic balance, detail, and silky elegance of presentation, make it a top-tier product, one of the very best in my experience. This is no surprise to me: George himself has wonderful sensibilities, well attuned to the task of fusing the audio arts and the music they cherish with the technical challenges posed by bringing the best out of the latest DSD advances. The results are splendid: A noble marriage of music with technology. We are all the beneficiaries of George Klissarov's achievements at exaSound!**

People have asked me “Why NativeDSD?” Why should Yarlung focus on one distributor for these much-anticipated Yarlung albums? NativeDSD.com results from its founder's love of music more than his love of profit. Jared Sacks is a superb musician and recording engineer living in The Netherlands but working all over the world, with a superb musical sense and extraordinary results with his recordings. Yarlung's recording library includes many albums from Channel Classics, Jared's label, and we were a fans years before we knew who Jared was. He created NativeDSD to serve the DSD listening community exclusively and to support labels that wished to join him in making these recordings widely available. Jared works with labels we respect greatly. Jared has this to say about his mission: “If you are tired of listening to compressed audio and your desire is to instead play uncompressed, original recording quality sound, this is your one stop shop. You will find detail in the music you were never able to hear before.... NativeDSD was founded... to create a central place where music fans could go to find the highest quality music in the world in both Stereo and Multichannel, directly from those labels recording (and releasing) in DSD.” How could we resist? Please let us know what you think of the results.

-Bob Attiyeh, producer  
[www.yarlungrecords.com](http://www.yarlungrecords.com)

Producer's notes:

When I listen to music just for fun, I tend to listen to jazz as much as I listen to classical music. The complexity and freedom in jazz, with its transatlantic origins in Africa and Eastern Europe, expresses and exposes the greatness and weakness of 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century culture in the United States. Jazz may be one of America's unique art forms, revealing much of the American psyche to ourselves and to the rest of the world. Indeed jazz musicians from the United States served as the country's unofficial ambassadors of American culture in Europe and Asia following World War II, and in places like Paris and Shanghai in the 1920s and 1930s. Jazz is no longer an "American" art; some of the finest jazz clubs thrive in Shanghai, Tokyo, London, Berlin and Paris, not just Los Angeles, Chicago, Detroit, New Orleans and New York.

Sophisticated Lady jazz quartet pays homage to the Great Tradition of American jazz but most of their repertoire is written by members of the quartet. Unlike the majority of contemporary jazz recordings, which are carefully and surgically perfected in postproduction, this album remains raw and fresh. These tracks are complete takes, "live to tape," without editing. The music on this recording is how Sophisticated Lady plays *without* the help of digital magic. The quartet rehearsed and performed some of these tracks before our recording but at least half are the first time through; the quartet discussed the tunes and who would take what solo in which order but without rehearsal. I wanted the intensity of raw improvisation. This is possible when superb musicians tackle new material together, listening carefully to each other and playing as a single organism. Some melodies, *For Andrew*<sup>1</sup>, for example, I played for them on the piano right before our take and the quartet improvised from there. Music cannot get fresher than this.

Yarlung Records did it again. This time it's their first jazz entry that has golden warmth of a Blue Note from its heyday as well as visceral instruments presence of a Contemporary Records. Recorded in Cammilleri concert hall using only a vintage tube stereo microphone, the sound of the CD is creamy like butter while the texture is so rich that you can easily discern which parts of the drum set the player hits and rubs. The big crescendo on 'For Andrew' is mind blowing!  
--Mori Shima, *Stereo Sound*, Japan

Yarlung makes recordings in concert halls, not studios. Our albums capture the sound of our musicians playing in real acoustic spaces. One of the leading neuroscientists in the world, Dr. Antonio Damasio, hired Yasuhisa Toyota to build a concert hall for him in the Dornsife Brain and Creativity Institute at the University of Southern

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<sup>1</sup> Sophisticated Lady, Volume 1

California in Los Angeles. The result is the spectacular and intimate Cammilleri Hall where Dr. Damasio generously invited us to make this recording.

When the members of Sophisticated Lady quartet first played in this acoustic marvel their eyes lighted up and excitement built. They responded to the beautiful sound in the hall immediately, and the acoustics enabled Yarlung to record this album with our characteristically minimalist approach. We used one AKG C24 stereo microphone from our friend Jon Fisher at Gearworks Pro Audio, with the addition of one AKG C12 for a small amount of reinforcement for Gary's bass. Elliot Midwood designed our microphone preamplification, and we recorded directly to RMGI 468 tape on our analog recorder with tube circuitry designed for Yarlung by Len Horowitz and to high resolution digital media. Our Steinway technician Robert Koning kept the piano in beautiful shape for our recording.

More jazz records should be like Sophisticated Lady Quartet—relaxed yet focused, tradition-based yet modern, elegant yet conveying a sure sense of swing. The recording is so pure that you almost feel as if you're eavesdropping on four musicians who seem completely in their element while performing, in a one-take environment, a set that's evenly split between previously rehearsed arrangements and performances where they had one chance to turn a composition into a memorable piece of music. No splicing or editing here—just a live-in-the-studio recording where the mood, playing and sonics are so solid that that jazz lovers will wish that the mostly-classical label Yarlung wandered over to this side of the street more often.

--Jeff Wilson, *The Absolute Sound*

We wish to thank Cammilleri's technical director Nic Monaco, as well as Dr. Damasio's "two right arms," Susan Lynch and Pamela McNeff-Smith. You made our first recording experience at Dornsife such a pleasure.

When the musicians first learned how Yarlung makes a recording, relying on the acoustic environment, without editing and without much post production, they understood it intuitively and welcomed the challenge. The quartet knew that Dr. Damasio had generously given us plenty of time in the hall (we spent our first day on set up and balance) and the fabulous acoustics meant they heard each other perfectly. This helped them relax into the recording.

Sophisticated Lady joins me in thanking our executive producer **John Pruitt**, a man whose friendship and wisdom I prize. John's generosity and coordination made our recording possible. John has helped jazz and folk and Native American musicians through Dog Soldier Press, which releases recordings, books and video, especially in support of the Lakota tradition.

We would also like to thank **Brenda Barnes**, president of the board of Yarlung Artists and our friend **Gerry Tywoniuk** for their generous support of this album. Thanks also to **Robert Levi** and The Los Angeles and Orange County Audio Society.

The members of Sophisticated Lady met at USC, where they earned their Master's degrees.

**JJ Kirkpatrick**, trumpet and flugelhorn, was born in Portland, Oregon. JJ began his diverse musical career at 9 when he scored the opening sequence to a 10-minute film he co-directed with his brother. JJ began playing trumpet that same year, studying with Portland legend Thara Memory. Mr. Kirkpatrick has performed with Wynton Marsalis, Tootie Heath, Beyonce, Craig Robinson, Louis CK among others, and works as a performer, composer and producer. Along with Andrew Boyle, Misha Bigos and Gary Wicks, JJ founded Sophisticated Lady jazz quartet. [www.jjkirkpatrickmusic.com](http://www.jjkirkpatrickmusic.com)

**Misha Adair Bigos**, piano, grew up in Seattle, Washington. After graduating from Gonzaga University he played piano on cruise ships for two years. Misha just graduated with his Master's Degree from the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, where he studied piano with Alan Pasqua and Sara Gazarek. Rather than holding his master's recital at school, Misha and Sophisticated Lady made their debut performance at Catalina Bar and Grill in Hollywood. For more about Misha please visit [www.mishaadair.com](http://www.mishaadair.com)

"Sophisticated Lady" performed this year for The Young Artist Jazz Series at Catalina Bar and Grill, and brought the crowd to their feet. I was so impressed with the group's innovation and talent in both their playing and writing. They bring a modern and creative energy to their original songs as well as standards, while maintaining the integrity of what is at the heart of jazz music. I have no doubt that they will have enormous success.

--Barbara Brighton, producer, Young Artists Jazz Series

**Andrew James Boyle**, drums, lives in Los Angeles, where he continues to study with his mentor, the legendary drummer Peter Erskine at USC. Andrew also studied with the wonderful Aaron Serfaty in Los Angeles, and before that with Tim Metz in Sacramento. Andrew maintains a busy schedule teaching and performing, locally and overseas. In addition to receiving multiple prestigious awards from USC, Andrew also earned the

Outstanding Soloist Award from the Monterey Next Generation Jazz Festival. Andrew was Yarlung's introduction to Sophisticated Lady quartet. Please visit [andrewboylemusic.nubook.com](http://andrewboylemusic.nubook.com)

**Gary Wicks**, bass, a virtuoso on both acoustic and electric bass, played and toured around the world with the Grammy Award® winning group The Manhattan Transfer for 5 years. With "The Transfer," Gary played in myriad international music festivals and on the group's most recent recording. Originally from Albany, NY, this second generation bassist has been a part of the vibrant music scenes in London, Los Angeles, Albany and Boston, where he earned his Bachelor's degree in Double Bass Performance from the New England Conservatory. Gary taught on faculty at the Silver Lake Conservatory of Music and currently teaches at The Musician's Institute. Gary proudly plays D'Addario Zyex bass strings and endorses Eden Electronics amplification. For Gary's compositions and arrangements, please visit [www.garywicks.com](http://www.garywicks.com), bassygrove productions (ASCAP).



Misha Adair Bigos, JJ Kirkpatrick, Gary Wicks, Andrew Boyle  
Cooper Bates Photography

## Thoughts on the music:

Jerome Kern's *I'm Old Fashioned*<sup>1</sup>, an arrangement by Gary, was the first piece played by the quartet several years ago and has become one of the quartet's most requested tunes. By contrast, Andrew Boyle's *Gone*, was a piece Yarlung commissioned and which Andrew presented to the quartet for the first time during our session. We had two takes, both of which earned a "star" in my recording notes. This is one of them. Gary surprised the group with his arrangement of Duke Ellington's and Billy Strayhorn's *Isfahan*, which was one of our first takes in Cammilleri Hall.

*For Andrew*<sup>2</sup>, in honor of Andrew Norman, is a free improvisation on a melody kernel I played for the quartet right before the take. These few notes come from Andrew Norman's *Music in Circles III*, a commission by the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, an organization close to Yarlung's heart. I asked Andrew if we could steal his notes in his honor, to commemorate his joining the faculty at USC, and he was delighted.

We hear *Sophisticated Lady* guided by JJ in a free improvisation on *Strange Fruit*<sup>3</sup>, the Abel Meeropol melody made so famous by Billie Holiday, a song instrumental in civil rights progress in the United States in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. Misha wrote *Ropes of Sand*<sup>4</sup> in a couple of hours while visiting his grandmother. *Ropes of Sand* and *Finale*<sup>5</sup>, also by Misha, are pieces the quartet has played often.

Look out Brubeck, *Sophisticated Lady*'s remarkable debut should perhaps be re-titled TAKE ONE. Why? Each tune was captured in one take! The 60+ minute CD also celebrates Yarlung's audiophile venture into JAZZ with a splatter of Chet Baker's seductive, kicked-back Californication daubed with a drizzle of Miles at his mellowest. No matter how busy your day, an evening spin through this one will definitely move your mood.

--David Thomson

The *Sophisticated Lady Jazz Quartet*'s debut recording should be of great interest to fans of forward-looking straight ahead jazz. Each of the four musicians is excellent both as soloists and in ensembles, the music that they perform ranges from melodic versions of standards to lyrical originals and freer explorations, and their subtle playing keeps one guessing. This CD is well worth exploring and I certainly recommend it. --Scott Yanow

Gary built *Night Night*<sup>1</sup> around a major seventh sharp five chord, which he uses to evoke the cozy feeling just before one falls asleep at night. Duke Ellington's timeless ballad *Sophisticated Lady*<sup>2</sup> inspired both the name and the sound of the quartet. Gary structured *Weightless*<sup>3</sup> around the quintessential dark tonality of the minor major seventh chord, reminiscent of early Miles Davis. Andrew reinforces this quality with his use of damped mallets on the drums.

Misha named *Fields of Kurdistan*<sup>4</sup> in honor of John Pruit, our valiant executive producer, who has been working on rotation as an oil geologist in Northern Iraq for the past few years and knows Kurdistan well. John arrived in Los Angeles from the Near East for the first day of our recording. The quartet's playing kept him awake and smiling for all three days of our sessions despite severe jetlag. Thank you John and thank you Misha.

Bob Attiyeh, producer

Executive Producer: John Pruit

Graphic Design: Eron Muckleroy

Album Cover Image: Cooper Bates Photography

<sup>1,2,3,4</sup> *Sophisticated Lady*, Volume 2



Jacob Horowitz, Andrew Boyle, JJ Kirkpatrick, Bob Attiyeh, John Pruit, Misha Adair Bigos, Gary Wicks



I like "Sophisticated Lady." A unique voice. Great improvising. One can hear everything on this recording, all the nuances and textures. I can *really listen* to this music because they have their own classic style. So much jazz is all the same today. "Sophisticated Lady" is refreshing. --Billy Mitchell

The group *Sophisticated Lady* has its eyes set on tomorrow's horizon — while their feet are planted in the terra firm of today — with the consummate skills and musical knowledge that have always been part of the jazz lore. They know their stuff and they can play! *Sophisticated Lady* gives me joy, hope, and I recommend them to you. --Peter Erskine





Cooper Bates Photography

One of those very cool involving jazz performances that bring you into the music from the very first note. The only thing this recording is missing are the expensive tickets and the sticky floor. It has become a reference of mine for space, front to back and left to right, and natural timbres. --Robert Levi

In a surprisingly short period of time, the adventurous GRAMMY® Award winning classical music label Yarlung has produced an eclectic catalog of impeccably recorded performances by a roster of adventurous musicians, including many that are well-known and others soon to be. The varied repertoire, with a refreshingly international flavor, covers everything from modern percussion to solo piano and violin to large scale symphonic works with singers.

The minimally miked “purist” recordings produced and engineered by label founder Bob Attiyeh in some of the world’s great concert spaces, are captured simultaneously on analog tape and high resolution digital and released on vinyl, reel-to-reel tape, CD and as high resolution Studio Master downloads.

Yarlung’s production and sonic model is distilled from the recording industry’s glorious past—one that pessimists were certain could never be successfully resurrected—while its forward-thinking business and distribution model points the way towards a healthy future for a “record business” long given up for dead by trendy “futurists.”

For older lovers of recorded classical repertoire, Yarlung’s catalog represents a return to sonic and musical greatness. For younger ones familiar only with dynamically and spatially compressed low resolution recordings, these from Yarlung are like 3D IMAX but without the glasses.

-Michael Fremer  
Editor [analogplanet.com](http://analogplanet.com)  
Senior contributing editor, *Stereophile*

Once upon a time there was a land of hi-fi. And it was gone all too soon. But thank Heavens for Yarlung Records. In the age of compressed digital downloads, it is refreshing to hear real sound and real music again, reminiscent of RCA Living Stereo in its golden age, or Mercury Records at its height. Yarlung's sound is liquid and transparent, just as if you were sitting in the concert halls with superb acoustics, where these recordings are made. Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles, Ambassador Hall in Pasadena, and Zipper Hall at The Colburn School, to name a few.

What Mercury did for Howard Hanson and the Eastman-Rochester Orchestra in the fifties, Yarlung Records is now doing for The Colburn Orchestra and Metropolitan Opera mezzo-soprano Sasha Cooke. You can hear the evidence on the album *If You Love For Beauty*, released in 2012. Who would have thought that a conservatory orchestra (granted the players are young superstars, soloists all), could capture the world's attention like this. I understand that Yarlung does this by using similar techniques to those in the golden age of recordings. Only one stereo microphone for smaller ensembles, and up to four microphones for full orchestras, recording directly to two track analog tape and high resolution digital.

Don't worry, Yarlung's recordings are all on iTunes, Amazon MP3 and so forth, but you can also order 180 Gram virgin vinyl LPs, exquisitely made CDs mastered by mighty Steve Hoffman, and high resolution downloads, all available worldwide through Naxos Global Logistics in Munich. Most exciting for analog tape enthusiasts might be the SonoruS Series of recordings on ¼ inch master tape. I recently reviewed Yarlung's *Martin Chalifour and the Los Angeles Philharmonic in Walt Disney Concert Hall*, another album I recommend highly.<sup>1</sup> Yarlung offers us a true feast for the ears, and this reviewer for one, wants more.

-Mori Shima  
Stereo Sound, Japan

# SOPHISTICATED LADY Jazz Quartet

**JJ Kirkpatrick**, trumpet and flugelhorn **Misha Adair Bigos**, piano

**Gary Wicks**, bass **Andrew Boyle**, drums

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This recording made possible with generous support from:

John Pruitt

Brenda Barnes

The Los Angeles and Orange County Audio Society

Special thanks to Gerry Tywoniuk for underwriting the commission of *Gone*, by Andrew Boyle

Recorded at the Brain and Creativity Institute's Cammilleri Hall  
University of Southern California, Los Angeles  
October 24-26, 2013

**Executive Producer: John Pruitt**

Producer and Recording Engineer: Bob Attiyeh

Assistant Producer: Jacob Horowitz

Mastering Engineers: Steve Hoffman & Bob Attiyeh

Microphone preamplification by Elliot Midwood

AKG C24 & C12 tube microphones: Gearworks Pro Audio

Steinway technician: Robert Koning

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Breaking the Sound Barrier

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