



SOPHISTICATED LADY

Jazz Quartet



Volume II

 **MERGING**

 **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
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

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| 1 <i>Gone</i> | 2:33 |
| Andrew Boyle
commissioned by Yarlung Artists | |
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The Merging Technologies Quartet

Merging Technologies has done the recording industry a great favor. The Swiss company, not much larger than Yarlung Records, is run by a small group of dedicated engineers and designers who took the original Direct Stream Digital (DSD) technology developed by Philips and Sony and made it usable for record labels. To Claude Cellier, Dominique Brulhart, Loïc Andrieu, Bertrand Van Kempen (at Merging Technologies near Lausanne) and Chris Hollebhone (in London) we say a most hearty thank you.

Not only did Merging create the first user-friendly method of recording in 256fs (or Quad DSD as music writer David Robinson affectionately calls it) using Horus or Hapi converters, but they created the Pyramix software bundle that enables us to create tracks and adjust volume in Native DSD.

Yarlung is indeed grateful to Merging Technologies. Not only did David Robinson loan us his Hapi and Pyramix software keys to make these transcriptions from our SonoruS Series of analog tapes, but Merging Technologies generously sponsored our second quartet of albums: the Merging Quartet.

We are “analog people” at Yarlung Records. Our assistant producer Jacob and I well remember a live concert recording session at The Broad Stage in Santa Monica during which the lights went out and we lost power briefly in the middle of the concert. The orchestra did not pause. Our primary analog tape recorders kept rolling through the short blackout but the high resolution digital system we were using at the time crashed. By contrast, we used the Pyramix software on a simple desktop computer for over a week without a single instability or freeze or need to reboot. Stable computer technology is important to us and we are grateful to the thinkers at Merging Technologies for putting so much effort into the details of their system.

And for engineers (like Morten Lindberg at 2L in Norway) who prefer to work in high resolution PCM, Merging Technologies created "DXD," which samples the music at 352.8 kHz with 24 bit depth.

Engineers have been vocal in their support of the sound quality they get using Merging equipment.

George Gilliam, for example, who records the Dallas Symphony writes:

I still cannot believe the sound quality improvement in the audio control room, all due to the fine microphone preamps and converters in Hapi/Horus. These are the highest quality I've experienced. This is an incredible system that perfectly meets the needs for classical music recording and production. I can't imagine using anything else.

David Robinson writes bluntly and enthusiastically:

This is the best Quad DSD A/D and D/A out there.

From the Grammy® Award winning team at 5/4 Productions:

Taking DSD from 2.8 MHz to 11.2 MHz doesn't just step it up to the next level, it catapults it!

Let's end with a comment from Tim Martyn, a 4-time GRAMMY winning engineer:

Merging Technologies' Horus brilliantly combines all three requirements any engineer would expect from such a device: pristine sonics, an elegant yet simple user interface, and rock solid reliability.

The Horus handles up to 48 analog channels, and the Hapi (using the same circuitry as the Horus) handles 16 channels.

Thank you Merging!

Bob Attiyeh, producer



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 20th and 21st 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*¹, 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

¹ 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

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

"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

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, 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*¹, 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*², 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*³, the Abel Meeropol melody made so famous by Billie Holiday, a song instrumental in civil rights progress in the United States in the mid 20th century. Misha wrote *Ropes of Sand*⁴ in a couple of hours while visiting his grandmother. *Ropes of Sand* and *Finale*⁵, 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*¹ 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*² inspired both the name and the sound of the quartet. Gary structured *Weightless*³ 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*⁴ 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

^{1,2,3,4} *Sophisticated Lady*, Volume 2



photo: Randy Bellous

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





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
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.¹ 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:

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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

Yarlung Records
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