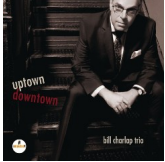


Bill Charlap Trio - Uptown, Downtown (2017)

Written by bluesever

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1 *Curtains* 2 *Spring Can Really Hang You Up The Most* 3 *Uptown, Downtown* 4 *The One I Love Belongs To Someone Else* 5 *I'm All Smiles* 6 *There's A Small Hotel* 7 *Satellite* 8 *Bon Ami* 9 *Sophisticated Lady* Bass – Peter Washington Drums – Kenny Washington Piano – Bill Charlap

Bill Charlap brings a sometimes energetic sometimes lissom touch to standards from the Great American Songbook on his new album, *Uptown Downtown*, recorded in New York with his regular sidemen, bassist Peter Washington and drummer Kenny Washington.

There is such an air of American song artistry about this very fine album that even the things that are not songs per se morph into songs without words, as it were, under the expert hands of Bill Charlap, surely one of the most expressive jazz pianists at large today.

Take the decidedly melodic opener *Curtains*, a Gerry Mulligan composition new to this writer. Bill recorded it with Mulligan on the baritone saxophonist's album *Lonesome Boulevard* in 1989 and the pianist also recorded the song with Ted Rosenthal on the *Gerry Mulligan Songbook* album in the 90s. The tune fits in with all that suggestion of vocal heritage that characterises *Uptown Downtown*.

You also get Jim Hall's charming saunter *Bon Ami*, which is also spirited or sneaked into this warm chamber of song celebration that is Charlap's metier, known for years for his treatments of Gershwin and Sondheim material. His take on the Wolf/Landesman classic, *Spring Can Really Hang You Up the Most* is replete with feeling, properly pitching the melancholy, yet dedicated to playing the tune with no frills. The title track, Sondheim's *Uptown, Downtown*

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stomps its way blithely, while the Jones/Kahn standard The One I love Belongs to Someone Else trots along the bouelvard, somehow belying the love-weary tendency which the title suggests. Isham Jones and Gus Kahn wrote it in 1924 for Al Jolson, but Frank Sinatra's rendition, recorded in 1940 with Tommy Dorsey, made it famous.

The Leonard-Martin song, I'm all Smiles is wry and rueful autumnal, one of the richer exercises on the record, being kind of opaque, foraging in a different patch of ground.

Just put Uptown Downtown on in the background and let the music grow around your room, your car, your head and heart-space. There is a kind of wholesome therapy at the hands of the Bill Charlap Trio that results in musical balm. ---Paddy Kehoe,
rte.ie/entertainment/music-reviews

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