Miles Davis - So What?

An old joke, but one worth hearing again: *A rabid jazz lover dies and goes to heaven, where St. Peter leads him into a club where Louis Armstrong, Billie Holiday, Duke Ellington and Lester Young are on the bandstand. Over in the corner stands a nattily dressed man clutching a trumpet, his back to the audience. "Who's that?" queries the fan. "Oh," says St. Peter. "That's just God. He's pretending he's Miles Davis."

So What?

*Kind of Blue* is a jazz album that has transcended the genre of jazz and become one of a handful of recordings whose very existence changes everything. That Miles Davis achieved this more than once in his career serves as evidence to even the most casual observer of jazz that he was one of its mystics, its visionaries.

Miles Davis, artwork by Michael Symonds
As pointed out by Ashley Kahn in the excellent book 'Kind of Blue: The Making of the Miles Davis Masterpiece', "Copies of the album are passed to friends and given to lovers. The album has sold millions of copies around the world, making it the best-selling recording in Miles Davis's catalog and the best-selling classic jazz album ever (...) Significantly, a large number of those copies were purchased in the past five years, and undoubtedly not just by old-timers replacing worn vinyl: Kind of Blue is even casting its spell on a younger audience more accustomed to the loud-and-fast esthetic of rock and rap."

Kind of Blue, album

The album is listened to by Clint Eastwood’s cool, brooding Secret Service agent in Line of Fire. It also casts a kind of Zen calmness, perhaps due in part to mythology and the enigmatic liner notes written by pianist Bill Evans.
Miles Davis

Miles Davis brought together seven now-legendary musicians in the prime of their careers: tenor saxophonist John Coltrane, alto saxophonist Julian "Cannonball" Adderley, pianists Bill Evans and Wynton Kelly, bassist Paul Chambers, drummer Jimmy Cobb and of course, trumpeter Miles Davis.

The album doesn't so much announce itself as kind of waft in on a cloud of Evans' piano and Paul Chambers' bass until Chambers locks onto the melody of So What, punctuated first by piano, then by the entire ensemble. The departure from bebop is clear from the album's opening tune, "So What," which would emerge as this new sound's anthem. Evans describes it on the album's liner notes as "a simple figure based on 16 measures of one scale, 8 of another and 8 more of the first … in free rhythmic style."

Miles Davis

The distinctive voicing employed by Bill Evans for the chords that interject the head, from the bottom up three perfect fourths followed by a major third, has been given the name "So What chord" by such theorists as Mark Levine.

In 2003, Kind Of Blue was ranked number 12 on Rolling Stone magazine's list of the 500 greatest albums of all time. The best selling jazz record of all time was released 50 years ago and it still sells 5,000 copies a week.

Miles Davis

Miles Davis - So What?

Miles Davis: So What Lyrics

Miles Davis walked off the stage, That's what the folks are all saying.
Oh yes he did leave the stage, After his solo was all over.

Coltrane he walked off the stage That's what the folks are all saying.
Yes they both left the stage Clean out of sight...

They felt they had to rehearse... Although we know they are masters They get a real Groovy sound,

And you will have to admit it.

Yes they both left the stage... Soon as their solo's were over.
And if you can't figure out, Their groove I'd like to help you...

*2nd* Their groove I've helped you SO WHAT!!!!

Thanks to thudord