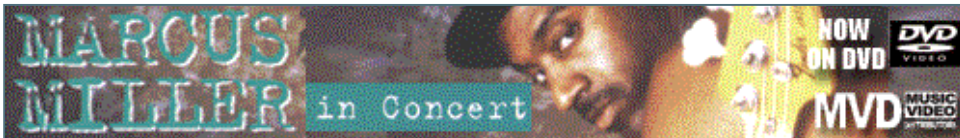




all about jazz



NEWSLETTER

TALK JAZZ

REVIEWS

INTERVIEWS

PROFILES

COLUMNS

GLOBAL JAZZ

GUIDES

GALLERY

CENTERS

[Welcome!](#) - [Newbie?](#) - [Monthly Greeting](#)
[Bookmark Us!](#) - [Contact Us](#) - [For Contributors](#)

Showcase

[Show All Titles](#)
[Promote Your Music](#)
Vertigo Quintet
The Vertigo QuintetOctobop
After DarkDan Jacobs
Blue After HoursThe Casualties of Jazz
Kind of BlackIsmael Reinhardt
Gypsy SwingJohn Pizzarelli
Knowing You

Column: DVD/Video Review

Miles Davis: The Cool Jazz Sound

Posted: 2005-04-17

By [John Kelman](#)

Miles Davis

The Cool Jazz Sound[Disconforme](#) 2869033Recorded 1959; released on
DVD 2004

Any chance to see archival footage of Miles Davis in performance is a treat, mainly because, for a career that spanned six decades, so little of

it seems available. And so EFORfilms, responsible for releasing the *Jazz Casual* series on DVD, has a sure winner with *Miles Davis: The Cool Jazz Sound*. Originally broadcast in 1959, this 25-minute television performance brings together Miles' quintet of the time, featuring saxophonist John Coltrane, pianist Wynton Kelly, bassist Paul Chambers and drummer Jimmy Cobb, along with Gil Evans and his orchestra, performing compositions culled from the albums *Kind of Blue* and *Miles Ahead*.

As great as it is to watch Miles and the quintet in action (and it *is* a quintet; even though the credits at the end of the program list Cannonball Adderley, he's nowhere to be found), it's almost as entertaining to see how different things were at the time. No PC folks concerned about the message that might be sent by seeing people smoking on camera; the narrator smokes throughout, and even Miles himself, after soloing on the one quintet track, "So What," can be seen in the background behind Coltrane, having a quick puff before he's needed back at the mike.



John Kelman

COLUMN ARCHIVE
[DVD/Video Review](#)
Recent Articles by John Kelman

[Senderos](#)
[Round About Weill](#)
[Miles Davis: The Cool Jazz Sound](#)
[Yesterday's Thoughts](#)
[The Hills Have Jazz](#)
[Two Masters: Live at the Prism Flying](#)

More [articles](#) by John



John O'Gallagher
[Line Of Sight](#)

Near You!

[Local Jazz Clubs](#)

Gallery



Featured Artist
[Frank Rubolino](#)

Audio & Video



Jazz Online
[Caribbean Jazz](#)
[Here and Now](#)

But PC rants aside, the good news is that, while there is a brief spoken introduction and conclusion, almost the entire show is dedicated to the music — the quintet’s reading of “So What,” followed by Gil Evans’ Orchestra performing “The Duke,” “Blues for Pablo” and “New Rhumba.” Considering that the recording is over 45 years old, the sound is remarkably good — you can actually feel Chambers’ low notes in your belly. The high end is a little lacking, so Cobb’s gorgeous cymbal work is to be imagined perhaps more than heard, but still, the overall recording has weathered well.

Everyone is in fine form, with Miles being in particularly good shape; while there are clearly cameras moving around the set, there’s a relaxed ambience; nobody seems self-conscious of the fact that the cameras are rolling. Coltrane and Kelly get ample space to solo on “So What,” with Chambers and Cobb as subtly swinging as always.

But the majority of the show is dedicated to Miles with the Gil Evans Orchestra, and it’s a joy to hear the arrangements, and watch Miles navigate between the written parts with well-positioned and clearly-conceived statements. It’s also a rare opportunity to see Miles playing the flugelhorn; given his penchant for a warm middle-register tone, it’s curious why he didn’t use the instrument more in his career.

The source tape is obviously old, with times where it clearly flutters. And there’s a slight delay between the audio and video, only noticeable if one is playing close attention to the players’ hands — but these deficiencies are a small price to pay for a vintage performance that, unlike other similar archival footage of Miles, is complete and uncut.

Miles Davis: The Cool Jazz Sound gives contemporary audiences a chance to see Miles in one of his peak creative periods, and at a time when many modern fans weren’t even a twinkle in their parents’ eyes. It’s important that this kind of archival footage be rescued from obscurity and released, so that a more complete picture of an artist with the kind of long career and stylistic diversity as Miles can be preserved.

Now if only some footage of Miles’ second quintet with Hancock, Shorter, Carter and Williams can be similarly rescued.

Personnel: Miles Davis Quintet: Miles Davis (trumpet, flugelhorn), John Coltrane (tenor saxophone), Wynton Kelly (piano), Paul Chambers (bass), Jimmy Cobb (drums)



Cover Story



[All Saxophonists Will Be Shot](#)

By [Bret Primack](#)

I once wrote a play set in the near future, when a one world government decrees that musicians must play “the song.” No other music is allowed. Everything else has been destroyed, except for the memories of certain musicians. In this petrified, angst ridden nether land... [full story](#)

[More Cover Stories](#)

The Gil Evans Orchestra with Ernie Royal, Clyde Reasinger, Louis Mucci, Johnny Coles, Emmett Berry (trumpet), Frank Rehak, Jimmy Cleveland, Bill Elton, Rod Levitt (trombone), Julius Watkins, Bob Northern (french horn), Bill Barber (tuba), Danny Bank (bass clarinet), Romeo Penque, Eddie Caine (woodwinds)

Track Listing: So What; The Duke; Blues for Pablo; A New Rhumba

 print this  email this  reprint this  license this

When not writing feverishly for AAJ, John Kelman contributes to the Canadian magazines Muzik Etc. and The Jazz Report. [More about John...](#)

More Recent Articles...

- [Meet Drummer Jimmy Bennington](#)
- [Bill Royston: Portland Jazz Festival Stretches Out](#)
- [Brasil! The Music of Hermeto Pascoal and Friends](#)
- [Charlie Haden & Quartet West at the Portland Jazz Festival](#)
- [Das Vibenbass: Live at Tost in Seattle](#)
- [John Scofield: Up Close & Personal](#)
- [Final Notes: Dr. Billy Taylor Retires from Concert Performance](#)



[Promote Your Music](#) - [Donate](#) - [Jazz Store](#) - [Jazz Personals](#)