



**TOMMY CECIL** BASS  
**BILL MAYS** PIANO

**TOMMY CECIL BILL MAYS  
SIDE BY SIDE  
SONDHEIM DUOS**

- SOMETHING'S COMING\***  
WEST SIDE STORY
- NOT WHILE I'M AROUND**  
SWEENEY TODD
- BROADWAY BABY**  
FOLLIES
- EVERY DAY A LITTLE DEATH**  
A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC
- BALLAD OF SWEENEY TODD**  
SWEENEY TODD
- SMALL WORLD\*\***  
GIPSY
- SIDE BY SIDE BY SIDE**  
COMPANY
- ANYONE CAN WHISTLE**  
ANYONE CAN WHISTLE
- COMEDY TONIGHT**  
A FUNNY THING HAPPENED  
ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM

\* Music by Leonard Bernstein, lyrics by Stephen Sondheim  
\*\* Music by Jule Styne, lyrics by Stephen Sondheim  
All other music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

Tracks 1, 2, 4, 7, 8, and 9 arranged by Tommy Cecil and Bill Mays  
Tracks 3 and 6 arranged by Bill Mays | Track 5 arranged by Tommy Cecil

Recorded, mixed and mastered by Yoshiaki Masuo at Kokinoki Studio,  
March and April, 2012

Bill Mays' touring schedule and discography: [billmays.net](http://billmays.net)  
Photo by Judy Krilley: [judykrilleyphotography.com](http://judykrilleyphotography.com)  
Produced by Tommy Cecil: [www.tommycecil.com](http://www.tommycecil.com)  
Printed, pressed, and packaged by Oasis Disc Manufacturing, [www.oasisCD.com](http://www.oasisCD.com)

This recording is dedicated to my mother, Helen Cecil, who in her enthusiastic and loving way introduced me to Broadway musicals when I was a kid.

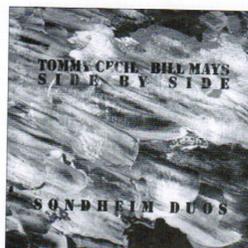
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compositions for one bassist. I'll leave it to the philosophers out there to debate whether or not the compositions are for solo bass, as many of them have Garcia-Fons setting up and playing along with his own sound loops. Setting up one or more loops while playing and getting it right is a skill in and of itself, and Garcia-Fons nails it, seamlessly, from the end of each loop back to the beginning. These looped performances are not gimmicks. Garcia-Fons shows tremendous musicality. Although his technique is beyond great, his performance is more than chops, it's heartfelt, it's poetry and dance, swordfights and midnight swims in tranquil waters. The listener is treated to soaring melodies and virtuosic passages, as well as his enviable Flamenco-like bow work and spot-on artificial harmonics. He even plays prepared bass on *Kalimbass*, as he weaves sheets of paper through the strings near the bridge so that the paper vibrates while he plucks, inspired by the African instrument, the *sanza*.

In addition to the concert, there is one bonus track that could surely be a contender for most gorgeous music video ever, and an interview with Garcia-Fons, who has a lot of valuable things to say, even after saying it all with his axe. Except for instances of video and audio not completely lining up or matching (possibly on purpose since the concert footage was shot over two days), the film direction and cinematography are luscious. It is only natural for bassists to watch a DVD like this with a bass player's eyes, looking at the player's technique or gear used, but here the viewer may become as captivated with the quality of the video shoot as with the bass playing, and that credit goes to director Nicolas Dattilesi.

While an accompanying CD has the same eleven tracks as the DVD, the DVD has the advantage of helping answer the inevitable question, "How does he do that?" A remarkable and remarkably beautiful product from a great artist. Treat yourself to **The Marcevol Concert**.

— Review by Chris Kosky



**Side By Side,  
Sondheim Duos**

Tommy Cecil, double bass  
Bill Mays, piano  
[www.tommycecil.com](http://www.tommycecil.com)

For a jazz bassist there are few, if any, more liberating formats than that of the duet. A duo with a skilled and like-minded player is heavenly, so Tommy Cecil must be sporting a halo (as well as his low-pitched, four-stringed harp)

as he musically converses with the deeply soulful and "ISB's own" pianist Bill Mays on *Side By Side*.

This CD includes nine songs by Stephen Sondheim,

all but one or two of which will likely be unfamiliar to most listeners, and this is great. With so much moaning about a perceived dearth of catchy tunes to blow on (and a quest by some for new tunes to become standards), why not look to one of the most prolific and still-walking-among-us composers? A search for a Sondheim song-ography brought me to an unofficial alphabetical listing. I wasn't even through the Cs when I counted 100 songs. Mr. Sondheim has written, conservatively, at least a thousand songs.

Each song chosen for this recording is given a unique treatment by the duo both in terms of feel, such as the light samba feel on *Something's Coming* from *West Side Story*, and in the way the songs are presented. As often as not, it is Cecil who delivers the melodies. Check out his lovely rendition of *Not While I'm Around* (*Sweeney Todd*). After delivering the melody with great sensitivity, Cecil goes on to play a gorgeous solo, availing himself of the full range of the instrument, all the while enjoying great support from Mays. I almost lost myself for a moment listening to this one. It is quite reminiscent of another piano playing Bill and his bassist Scotty. A similar déjà vu occurred while listening to *Every Day A Little Death* (*A Little Night Music*) in which I heard shades of Duke and Mr. JB. It's no wonder after all, when one considers how experienced and well-listened they are, and ultimately it's Mays and Cecil that shine through. Cecil delivers the melody again, appropriately sinister on *Ballad of Sweeney Todd*, over the full orchestra that is Mays' two hands. This track is magical, with a cool arrangement and excellent playing.

A true delight of this recording is when the two trade, as on *Side By Side* and *Comedy Tonight*, because they're both musical encyclopedias and can match each other like two erudite professors trading quotes. *Side By Side* is definitely an album one can play over and over and relish, always finding something previously unheard. A wonderful pair and a wonderful album.

— Review by Chris Kosky

**Modern American Bass**

Robert Black, double bass  
John McDonald, piano  
New World Records 80722-2

Bassist Robert Black's new CD *Modern American Bass* takes the listener on a historical and incredibly diverse tour of music for double bass written in the middle decades of the 20th century. The selections are thoughtfully organized, and would make up a compelling basis for a lecture-recital on the highly varied use of the solo double bass in contemporary classical music of the last century. However, Robert Black's playing speaks for itself, and though only a few of the selections from this two-disk set have made it into the canon of regularly performed bass litera-



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### Tommy Cecil and Bill Mays: Side by Side: Sondheim Duos (2012)

By [DR. JUDITH SCHLESINGER](#), Published: August 6, 2012

This is a brilliant collection of nine songs associated with composer Stephen Sondheim and delivered by the estimable pianist [Bill Mays](#) and excellent bassist Tommy Cecil. Cecil, who initiated and produced the project, is well-known in Washington, D.C., but his huge talent should bring him much wider attention. As for Mays, there's always the sense of a quick intelligence and ready humor behind those formidable chops; no pianist currently plying the trade makes more thoughtful and satisfying choices.



The party begins with a rousing version of "Something's Coming" that hints of what's to come: great technique, playfulness and witty quotes, full-out swing, intimate, pitch-perfect sound, and the kind of empathic interplay that it usually takes years to develop. Moreover, their mutual time is so good that a drummer is never missed. Each player has his say with full space and support from the other, while interest is sustained by the imaginative arrangements, wide variation in mood and feel, and clever reimagining of Sondheim's harmonies, which were never particularly jazzy to begin with.

Other highlights include the "Ballad of Sweeney Todd," where Cecil leads over Mays's suggestive harmonies and the tune soon gets deranged (much like Sweeney himself); the gorgeous lyricism of "Not While I'm Around" and "Small World"; and the full-out fun of "Broadway Baby." The solos are consistently intriguing and melodic, and the session ends with a delightful take on "Comedy Tonight" and a final surprising but relevant quote.

In a world where record labels implode every day, and the survivors increasingly cling to some pandering pop hybrid or other, it's reassuring that a project of this quality can still appear. True jazz fans will find much to savor here, from beginning to end.

Track Listing: Something's Coming; Not While I'm Around; Broadway Baby; Every Day a Little Death; Ballad of Sweeney Todd; Small World; Side by Side by Side; Anyone Can Whistle; Comedy

<http://www.allaboutjazz.com/php/article.php?id=42631>

P:

It has often been my feeling that jazz musicians were missing out on some wonderful opportunities for creative expression by mostly ignoring the melodies of Stephen Sondheim. His compositions do not lend themselves easily to jazz interpretations, but for those adventurous enough to venture into this musical territory, the rewards can be bountiful. Bassist **TOMMY CECIL** and pianist **BILL MAYS** possess the kind of musical imagination necessary to take such a trip, and the results can be found on *Side By Side: Sondheim Duos* (Tommy Cecil – No Catalog Number). Both of these gentlemen are sublime improvisers who take each song on twists and turns that often lead to unexpected but pleasurable places. Of the nine tracks, seven are songs composed by Sondheim, "Not While I'm Around," "Broadway Baby," "Every Day a Little Death," "Ballad of Sweeney Todd," "Side By Side By Side," "Anyone Can Whistle" and "Comedy Tonight," while the other two, "Something's Coming," composed by Leonard Bernstein, and "Small World," composed by Jule Styne, have lyrics by Sondheim. In both cases, the musicians allow you to hear the words in your mind, but use these recognizable melodies as springboards for pushing them into new frontiers. For me, the most fascinating track is "Ballad of Sweeney Todd," as they capture the nightmarish spirit of the dark tale that Sondheim brought so brilliantly to the stage. If this album is not on every Top Ten jazz list for this year, there is no justice in this world. ([www.tommycecil.com](http://www.tommycecil.com))

--Joe Lang. *Jersev Jazz (Sept. 2012)*

**Side By Side: Sondheim Duos;** Tommy Cecil, bass, Bill Mays, piano.

**Intersection;** Bill Mays and Road Work Ahead.

**Delaware River Suite:** Bill Mays and the Inventions Trio.

Twenty-some years ago, I had the honor of interviewing alto sax icon Bud Shank. I asked him the following "fantasy" question: "If you could work with only one pianist for the rest of your career, who would it be?" With no hesitation whatsoever, Bud answered, "Bill Mays." An endorsement like that doesn't arrive every day. And when you listen to these CDs, you'll fully understand Bud's enthusiasm. The first recording, the Stephen Sondheim material, is an intimate, recital-like presentation of Sondheim's gems, both older and newer. My personal faves were the ones I tended to know. Like me, they were the "old timers" such as "Something's Coming," "Small World," "Anyone Can Whistle" and "Comedy Tonight." Five additional choices, of somewhat more recent vintage, clearly reflect the timeless quality of Sondheim's contribution to American music. And in the hands of Mays, they are truly something special.

"Intersection" reintroduces us to Mays' West Coast group. Although he's been an East Coast cat for years, Mays has maintained his connection with the Californians he regularly worked with during his LA years. They include Peter Sprague, guitar, Bob Magnuson, bass, and Jim Plank, drums. This very straight ahead quartet interprets a variety songs ranging from "Inchworm" (remember Danny Kaye in "Hans Christian Andersen?") to Lennon and McCartney's "And I Love Her"; from standards that include "The Very Thought of You" and "There's a Small Hotel"; to a lovely tune of more recent vintage, "Estate"; and even the rarely heard gem "Our Waltz." These and others present this quartet in stirring musical communication. It's simply an album of the highest musical level.

Finally there's "Delaware River Suite." Somehow I missed out on this when it was issued in 2008, but if you can find a copy today, it just might be the most gorgeous of the three. Mays re-acquaints himself with two brilliant musicians with classical connections and jazz chops -- Marvin Stamm on trumpet and flugelhorn and Alisa Horn's cello combine with Mays' piano in a trio that is rich, rare, sultry and sensuous. The tunes range from bossa (Jobim's "Zingaro") to bebop (a medley of Miles' "Sippin' At Bell's" and Bud's "Dance of the Infidels") to Django's classic beauty, "Nuages." Among other stunning selections, you'll also experience Mays' original work in both spoken and musical interpretations with his picturesque seven-track extravaganza, the "Delaware River Suite." Mays is an amazing, invigorating, unique and creative presence in the pantheon of American music. And, by the way, Bud Shank was right.