

Michel *Plays* Legrand



Windmills of Your Mind

What Are You Doing
The Rest of Your Life?

The Summer Knows

Little Boy Lost

Brian's Song

Summer Me, Winter Me

Watch What Happens

and more!

12 306

LASERLIGHT

68 Min.

DIGITAL

- 1 **Summer Me, Winter Me** [3:49]
From the film "Picasso Summer"
- 2 **What Are You Doing
The Rest Of Your Life?** [6:52]
From the film "The Happy Ending"
- 3 **The Summer Knows** [5:03]
Theme from the film "Summer of '42"
- 4 **This Quiet Room** [5:00]
- 5 **Brian's Song
(The Hands Of Time)** [5:16]
From the TV movie "Brian's Song"
- 6 **Watch What Happens** [11:22]
From the film "The Umbrellas
Of Cherbourg"
- 7 **You Must Believe In Spring** [5:24]
From the film "Les demoiselles
de Rochefort"
- 8 **How Do You Keep
The Music Playing?** [5:55]
From the film "Best Friends"
- 9 **One At A Time** [5:19]
From the film "La Piscine"
- 10 **Little Boy Lost** [3:23]
- 11 **La Valse Des Lilas
(Once Upon A Summertime)** [4:25]
- 12 **The Windmills Of Your Mind** [4:28]
From the film "The Thomas
Crown Affair"

Michel Legrand, composer,
arranger, leader, piano & vocals
Arturo Sandoval, trumpet
and flügelhorn
Bill Watrous, trombone
Bud Shank, alto saxophone
Buddy Collette, flute
Hubert Laws, flute
John Pisano, guitar
Pete Christlieb, tenor sax
Brian Bromberg, acoustic bass
Peter Erskine, drums

Produced By Ralph Jungheim
Recorded direct to two-track digital
September 27 & 28, 1993 in Hollywood

LASERLIGHT
DIGITAL

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STEREO



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"I want to be surprised by the music," says Michel Legrand. "To me, a great jazz album has to have spontaneity."

Legrand couldn't have picked a more explosively spontaneous group of players than he has for this album, which celebrates not only his skill as a jazz musician, but his extraordinary abilities as a songwriter, as well.

"When I say surprise," he continues, "I mean, very specifically, that I want to be surprised – and that I want the musicians to be surprised – because that unexpectedness, that sudden inspiration, is what is the essence of jazz to me."

And a sense of sudden inspiration, of sudden surprise is exactly what characterizes "Michel Plays Legrand." Take the opening track, "**Summer Me, Winter Me,**" with its buoyant bossa nova rhythms. It's a lovely, spirited reading that becomes something very special when Hubert Laws kicks off a soaring improvisation that eventually interacts – spontaneously – in a high-flying interaction with Legrand's piano. Quick, rapid-fire notes are ripped out in sudden abandon – an unexpectedly turbulent climax sustained by irrepressibly sunny rhythms from Brian Bromberg's bass, Peter Erskine's drums and John Pisano's guitar. In dramatic contrast, Laws turns to the deep timbres of the alto flute as the perfect vehicle for an exploration of Legrand's uplifting melody and rich harmonies on "**Brian's Song,**" assisted by Pisano's crisp guitar accents. And, again in sudden surprise, Legrand kicks off a brisk middle-section double-time improvisation.

"**Watch What Happens**" presents a different kind of jazz revelation, with its straight-ahead rhythms and hard driving solos from Pete Christlieb, Bill Watrous, Albert Sandoval, Bud Shank, Bromberg and Erskine. This is jazz which is reminiscent of Legrand's early outings in the late fifties and early sixties, with crisp ensemble sections alternating with serious improvising.

"I looked at each song with a little chart in mind," says Legrand. "Not really full arrangements, but sort of like little road maps – so that each person knew what to do, when to play, and so forth. But nothing more than that. I wanted to leave room for the music to find its own way."

Other surprises? Sure. How about Legrand's splendidly rhapsodic treatment of "**You Must Believe In Spring?**" Or the cool-textured ensemble voicings on "**One At A Time**" (lovingly enriched with Sandoval's sensual flugelhorn solo)? And the jaunty rhythms – and soaring trombone work of Watrous – on "**Little Boy Lost.**" Finally, appropriately closing the album, the unexpectedly up-tempo, hyper-energetic version of the usually lyrical "**Windmills of Your Mind.**" Give Legrand credit for being able to view his own works from a constantly changing perspective. A rare quality indeed.

Then there are the ballads – the deep and wondrous core of Legrand's music – the ballads that always seem perfectly structured for jazz improvisation.

"I hope most of my songs have that capacity," says Legrand. "They weren't always written with jazz in mind, but I like the intensity and strength and richness of harmonies underneath a melody, and that's usually what works very well for jazz improvisation."

Very well indeed, this time around. Listen to Sandoval's late-night, city-light mood on "**What Are You Doing the Rest of Your Life.**" Add the fiery passions of Shank and Christlieb on "**The Summer Knows,**" and the delicate interplay between Legrand, Pisano and Buddy Collette in the lovingly crafted examination of "**How Do You Keep The Music Playing?**"

The biggest surprise of all? Legrand's vocals on "**This Quiet Room**" and "**La Valse Des Lilas (Once Upon A Summertime),**" the former in English, the latter in French. Although he would be the first to deny it, Legrand is something more than a singing piano player. Each vocal has the sensitive touch, and the lyrical skill of a singer who understands the voice as both an instrument and a story-telling medium. Legrand even takes matters one step further in "La Valse," singing a scat chorus that explores harmonic intervals rarely heard in any jazz singing. Despite hundreds of albums and more than 200 movie scores already in his resume, Legrand still generates big time enthusiasm for everything he does – especially for the jazz gigs. "Michel Plays Legrand" was a stop on the way between touring, composing and his much disliked daily practicing ("I've hated it for 55 years, and I still hate it; but I have to do it every day"). But it was a good stop, and one that he recalls with great pleasure.

"The opportunity to do a pure jazz date always makes me feel good," he says, "because it allows me to experience new surprises in every tune. It's like Stravinsky once said, 'People who have a hard time sleeping at night are always looking for a fresh place on the pillow.' Well, that's me. Always looking for a fresh place on the pillow."

– Don Heckman

Recorded direct to two-track digital September 27 & 28, 1993 at Entourage Studios, North Hollywood, CA

Associate producer: Jim DiGiovanni • Engineer: Jim Mooney • Second engineer: Steve Chase

Music preparation: William Castleman • Digital editing and mastering: Bill Lightner, K disc mastering, Hollywood, CA

Arturo Sandoval appears courtesy of GRP Records • Bill Watrous appears courtesy of GNP Crescendo Records

Hubert Laws appears courtesy of Musicmasters Records • Peter Erskine appears courtesy of ECM Records

Special thanks to Alan & Marilyn Bergman, David Sneed, Carlos Valdeji, Brian Chase and Lucille Hunt

- 1 Summer Me, Winter Me** [3:49]
From the film "Picasso Summer"
(Alan & Marilyn Bergman / Michel Legrand)
Warner / Chappell Music Inc. / ASCAP
- 2 What Are You Doing
The Rest Of Your Life?** [6:52]
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(Alan & Marilyn Bergman / Michel Legrand)
EMI U Catalogue Inc. / ASCAP
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- 4 This Quiet Room** [5:00]
(Alan & Marilyn Bergman / Michel Legrand)
F Sharp Prod. Ltd. / Threesome Music / ASCAP
- 5 Brian's Song
(The Hands Of Time)** [5:16]
From the TV movie "Brian's Song"
(Alan & Marilyn Bergman / Michel Legrand)
Screen Gems / Colgems / ASCAP
- 6 Watch What Happens
Of Cherbourn** [11:22]
From the film "The Umbrellas"
(Norman Gimbel / Michel Legrand)
Songs of PolyGram International / BMI
- 7 You Must Believe In Spring** [5:24]
From the film "Les demoiselles
de Rochefort"
(Alan & Marilyn Bergman / Michel Legrand)
N.S. Beaujolois / EMI U Catalog Inc. / ASCAP
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(Eddy Marnay / Michel Legrand)
MCA Music Publishing Group / ASCAP
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EMI U Catalog Inc. / ASCAP

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COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO

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Plays
Legrand**

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