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# Bill Evans: An Historical Perspective

Bill Evans (1929–80) was an extraordinary musician whose influence on jazz instrumentalists continues to be felt to this day. Through his facility for phenomenal gentleness of melody, his ability to voice chords, to invent cross-rhythms and countermelodies, and his highly structured but flexible improvisations, he made an indelible mark in the jazz world as both a leader and a sideman. He influenced some of the greatest musicians of the early cool jazz era, including Miles Davis, John Coltrane, and Cannonball Adderley.

Born William John Evans August 16, 1929, he began his piano studies at the age of six. He learned to play violin at the age of seven, and flute at the age of thirteen. He credited his older brother Harry for influencing him to take piano lessons. By the age of twelve he was substituting for Harry in Buddy Valentino's band. An early musical breakthrough occurred for him while playing a stock arrangement of Tuxedo Junction in B: he became inspired and put in a blues phrase of D:-D-F and realized he could create new phrases in musical arrangements. This idea became and remained the central one of his musical career.

Throughout his high school days, he played four or five nights a week and worked resort jobs in New Jersey during the summer. As he was acquiring all of this practical experience, he was becoming deeply immersed in jazz through buying recordings of Coleman Hawkins, Bud Powell, and Dexter Gordon. He would listen to the great artists in jazz clubs and gained insight to be used in his own musical development this way.

Evans received a music scholarship to Southeastern Louisiana College, graduating in 1950. During this time, he participated in jam sessions with guitarist Mundell Lowe and bassist Red Mitchell. After college, he joined Herbie Fields' band and learned to accompany horn players. During a stint in the army (1951–54), he continued to gig around the Chicago area. When discharged from the army, he decided to pursue a jazz career and settled in New York. His reputation as an exceptional musician grew with joining the dance band of Jerry Wald and Tony Scott. His first professional recording was as an accompanist for singer Lucy Reed in 1955. In 1956, he became a part of George Russell's avant-garde band.

Bill Evans' first recording as a leader of a trio was in 1956 with Paul Motian on drums and Teddy Kotick on bass. This recording yielded four Evans originals: "Five," "Conception," "No Cover, No Minimum," and "Waltz for Debbie." Another major bread in his career was in joining Miles Davis' sextet a short time later. In the less than one year that they were together, Evans recorded ten

albums with Miles Davis (February to November 1958). After leaving Davis' sextet, Evans had his second foray as a leader, recording with Philly Joe Jones and Sam Jones, with a hard-bop focus in performances of "Night and Day," "Minority," and "Oleo."

One of his most memorable recordings was Miles' breakthrough album, *Kind of Blue*, in 1959. Miles had planned the session around Evans' playing, with only sketches of ideas and no rehearsals in order to capture the musicians' spontaneity. This album was acclaimed as a masterpiece in spite of Miles Davis' frustration for not having achieved the exact sound he wanted. Bill Evans wrote the liner notes, beautifully capturing the spontaneous process of this particular recording.

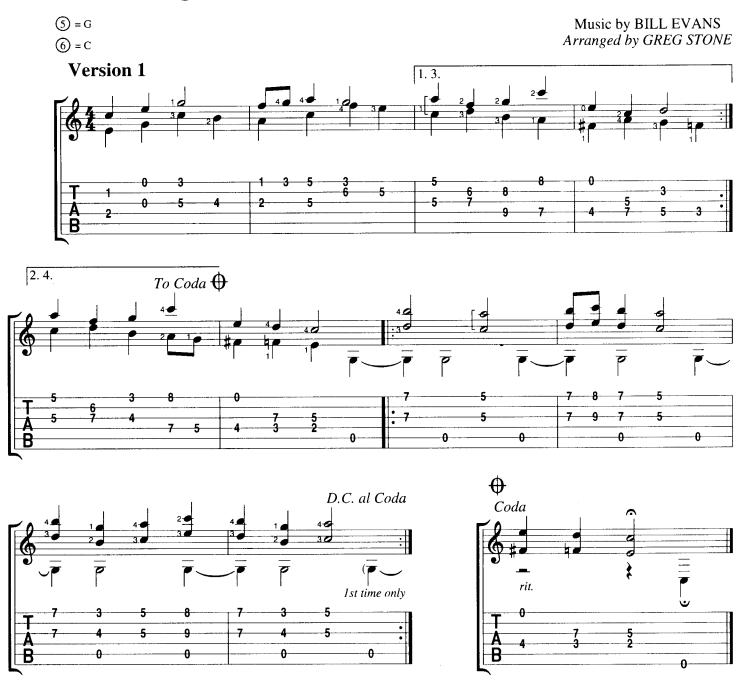
From this point on, Evans launched into a career characterized by mostly trio recordings. Bill Evans' ideas of trio recordings and playing meant that the bassist and drummer had more active roles than most rhythm section sidemen in trios and featured more interplay among the musicians. He made a series of live recordings at the Village Vanguard in 1961, which are considered among his best. The recordings featured Scott LaFaro on bass and Paul Motian on drums.

Evans went on to become the recipient of several jazz awards, including the *Down Beat* International Jazz Critics Poll and Readers Poll. He won two NARAS Grammy awards for Best Jazz Album of the Year: *Conversations With Myself* (1964) and *Bill Evans at the Montreaux Jazz Festival* (1968).

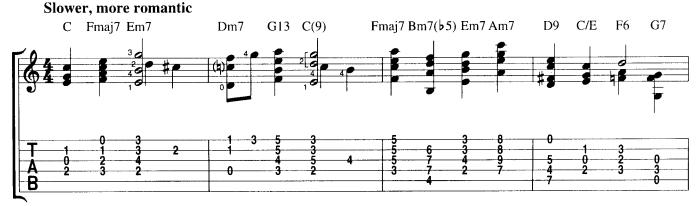
After his death in 1980, a double album was produced and assembled in 1983 by pianists who had been influenced or touched by Evans, each contributing a single piece. His stature and reputation have only continued to grow, with a newsletter devoted to his music edited by Win Hinkle in North Carolina, and now on the Internet. He remains an enduring force in jazz piano.

-Kim Youngstrom

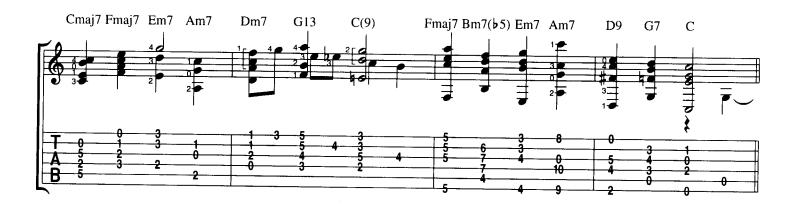
#### **CHILDREN'S PLAY SONG**



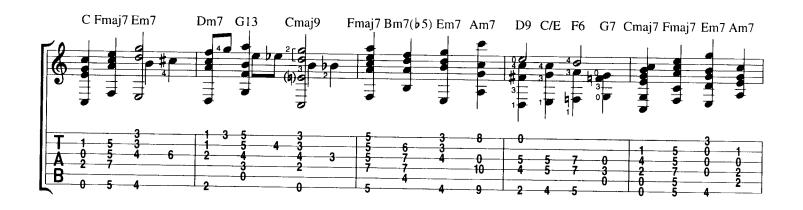
Version 2



Childen's Play Song – 2 – 1 0426B





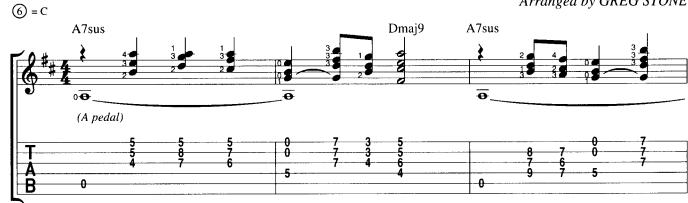


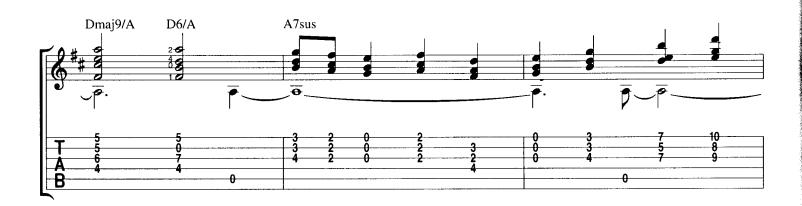


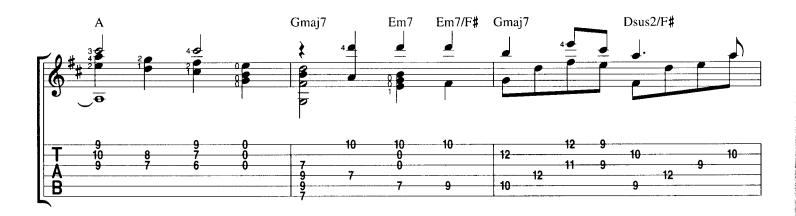
Childen's Play Song – 2 – 2 0426B

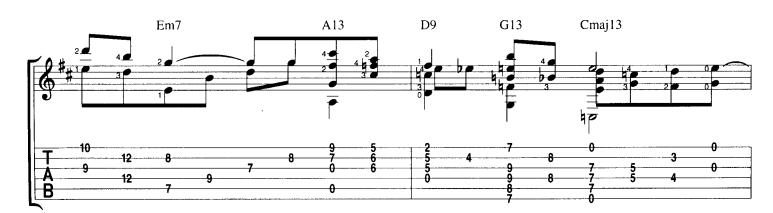
#### **MY BELLS**

Music by BILL EVANS Arranged by GREG STONE

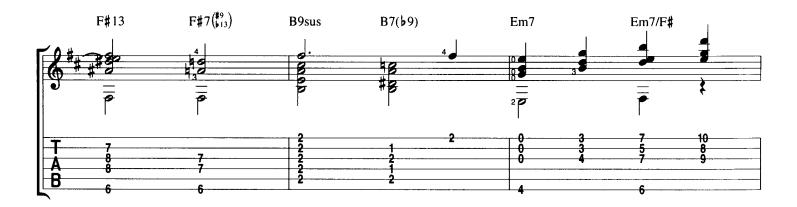




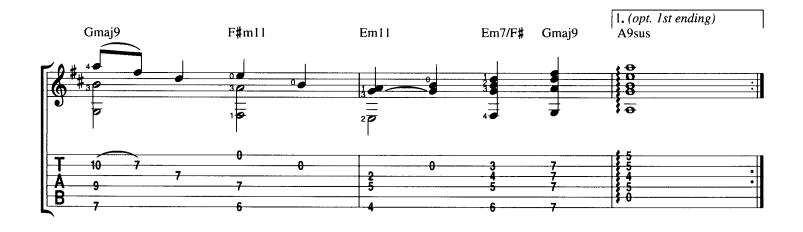


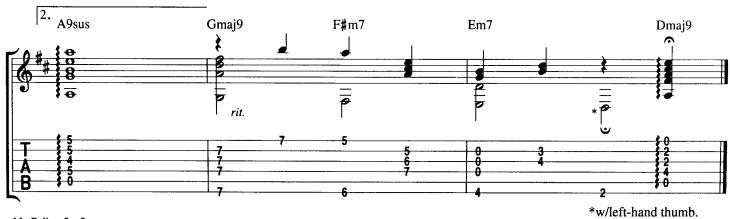


My Bells – 2 – 1 0426B





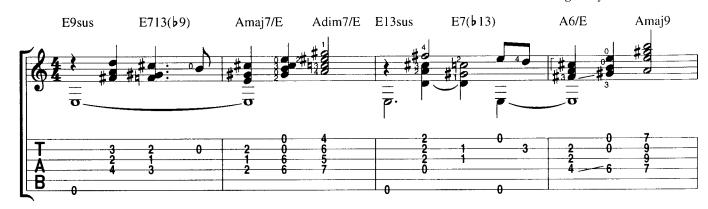


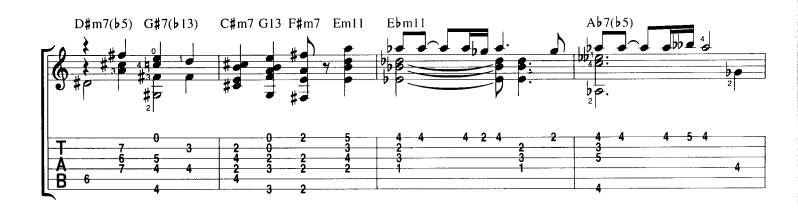


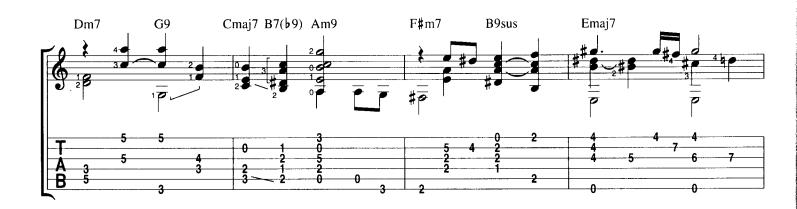
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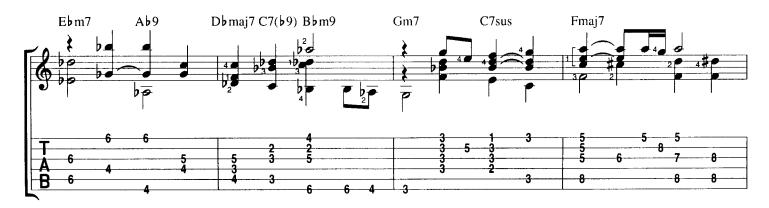
#### **ONLY CHILD**

Music by BILL EVANS Arranged by GREG STONE







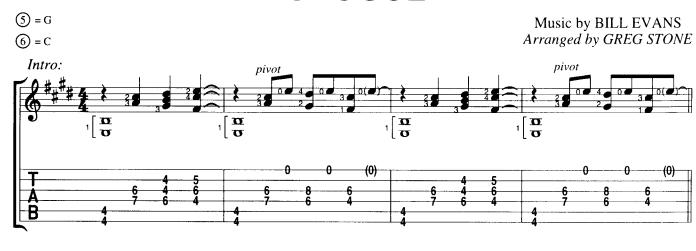


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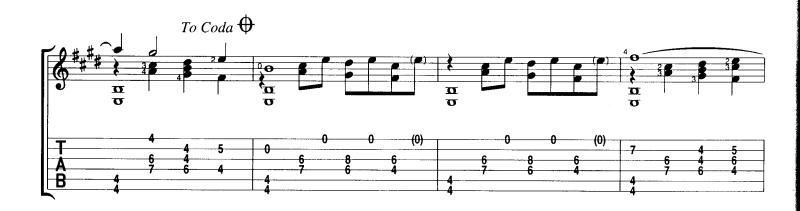


Only Child – 2 – 2 0426B

#### **PROLOGUE**









Prologue – 2 – 1 0426B



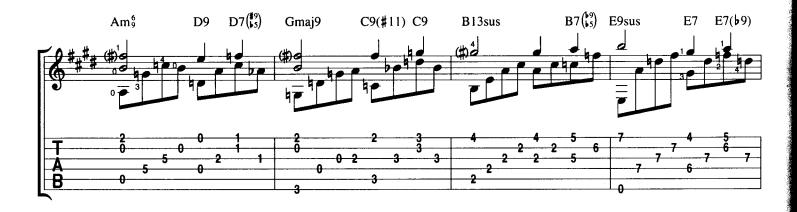
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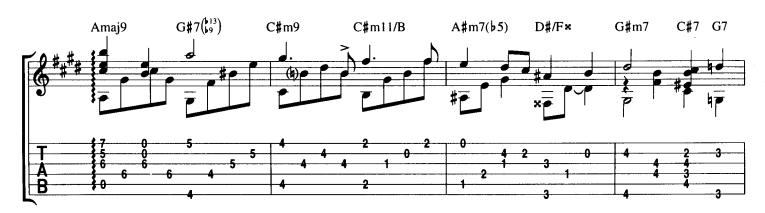
#### **SONG FOR HELEN**

Music by BILL EVANS Arranged by GREG STONE









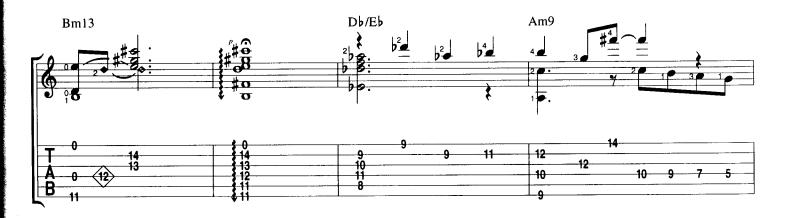


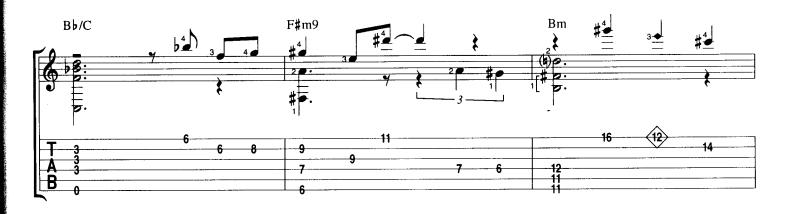
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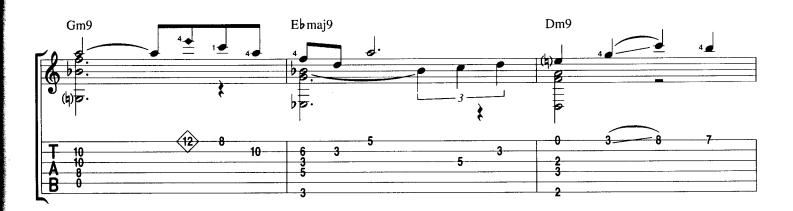
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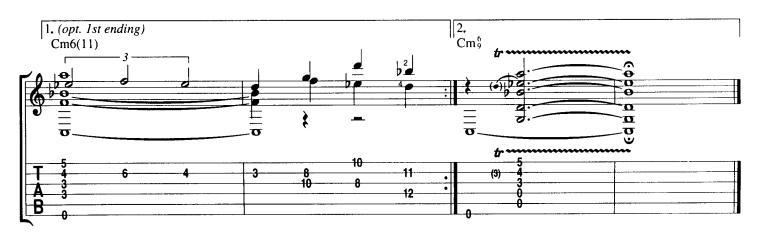


Time Remembered -2 - 1 0426B







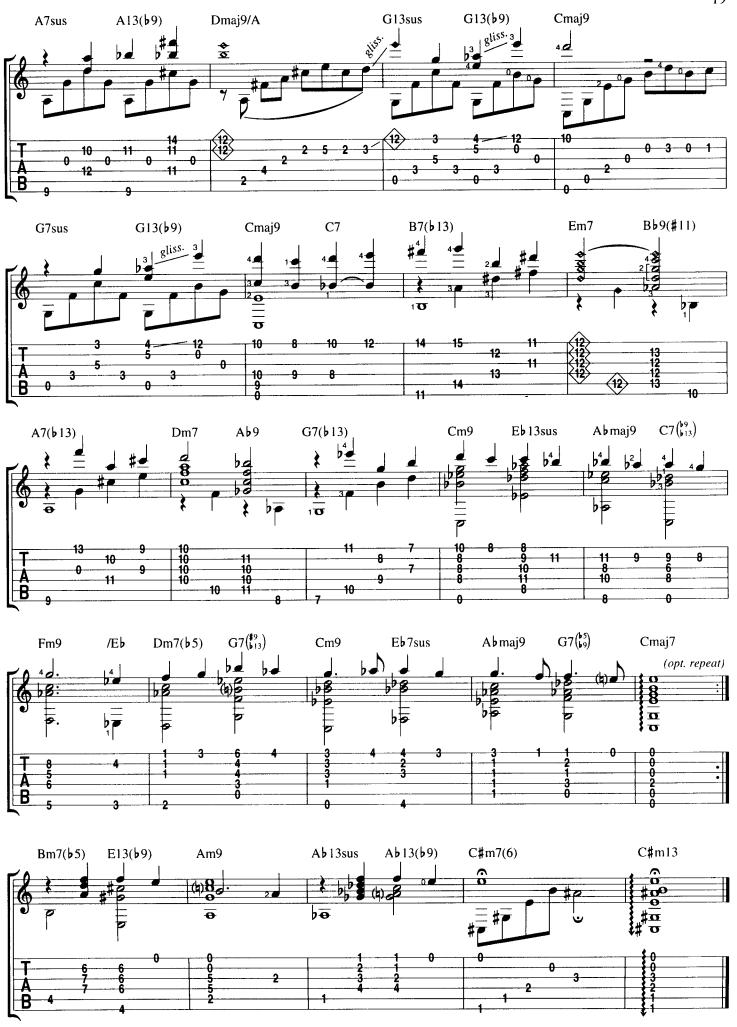


#### TURN OUT THE STARS



Turn Out the Stars -2-1 0426B

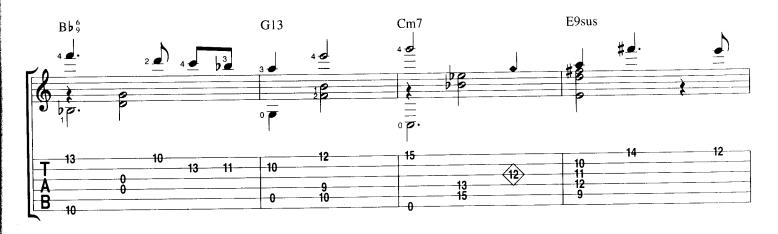
TRO — © 1966 (Renewed), 1969 (Renewed) and 1987 LUDLOW MUSIC, INC., New York, NY International Copyright Secured Made in U.S.A. Used by Permission All Rights Reserved including Public Performance for Profit

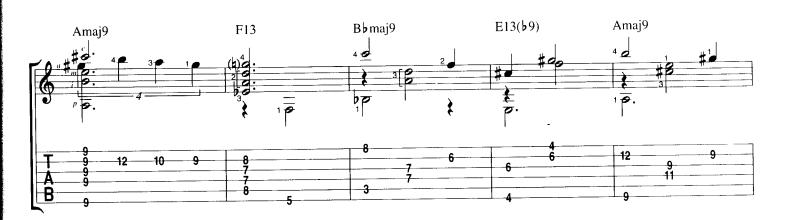


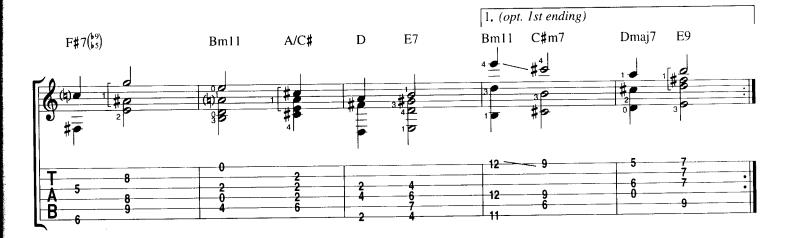
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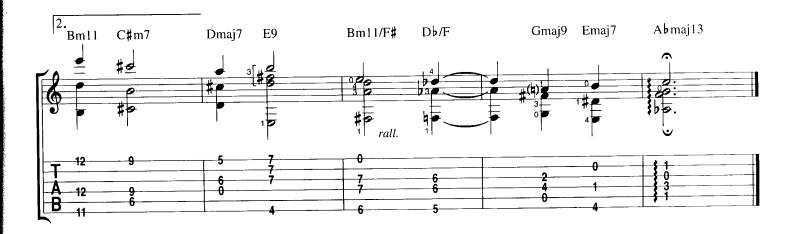
#### **VERY EARLY**





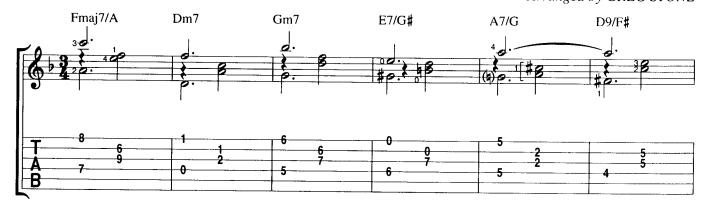




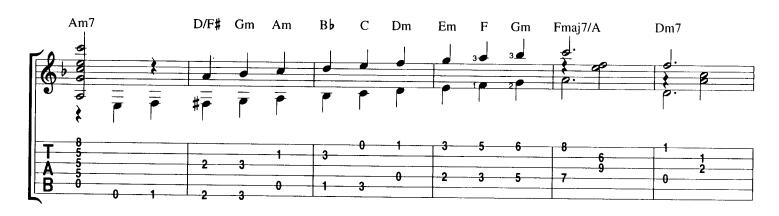


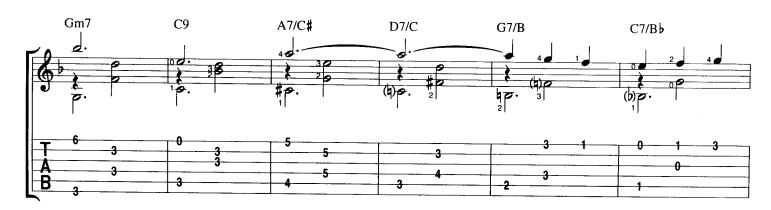
#### WALTZ FOR DEBBY

Lyric by GENE LEES Music by BILL EVANS Arranged by GREG STONE









Waltz for Debby -3-1 0426B

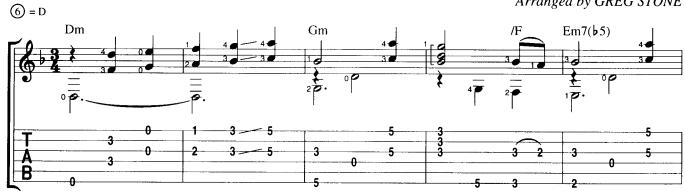


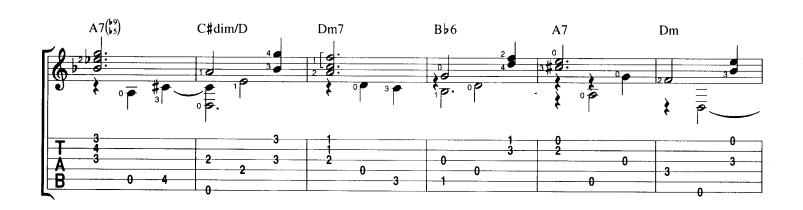


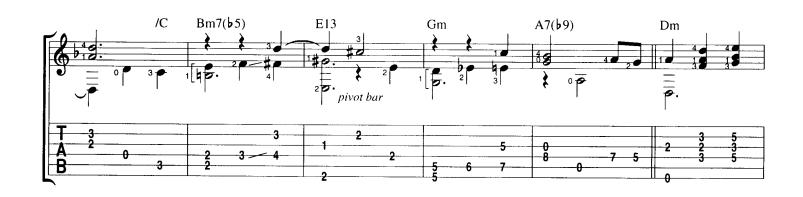
Waltz for Debby -3-3 0426B

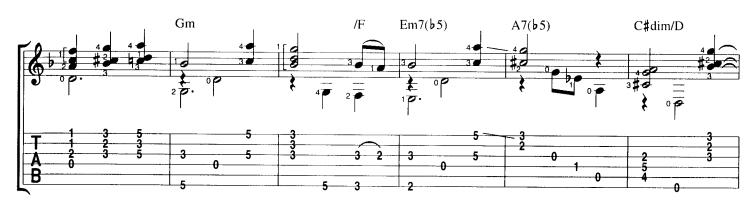
### WE WILL MEET AGAIN

Music by BILL EVANS Arranged by GREG STONE

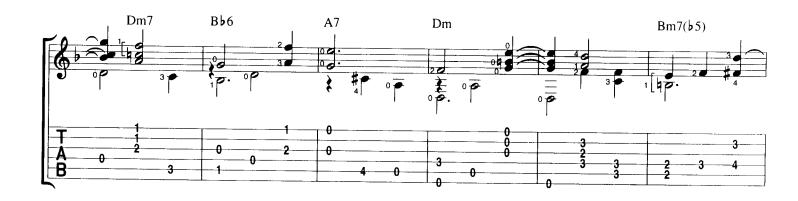


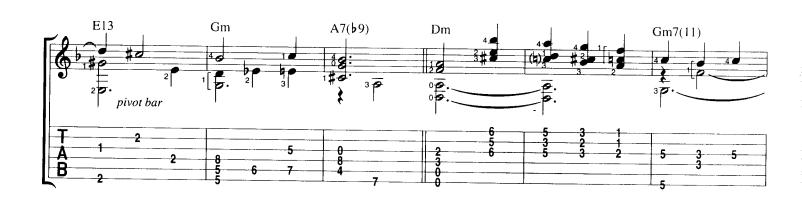


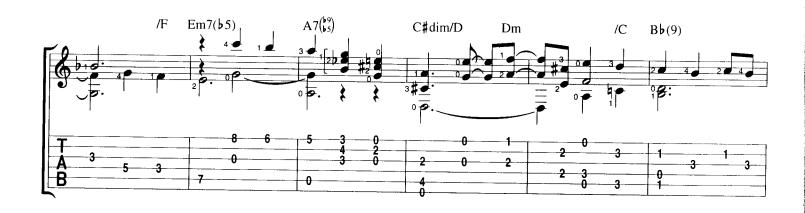


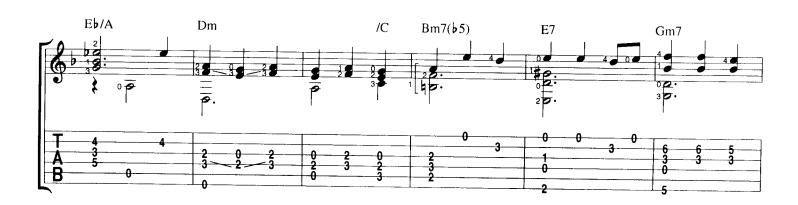


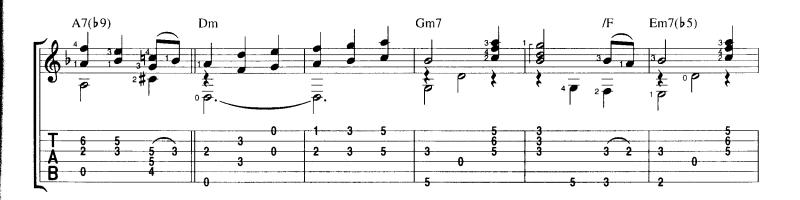
We Will Meet Again – 3 – 1 0426B

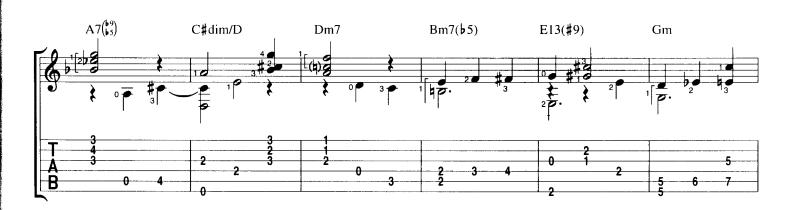


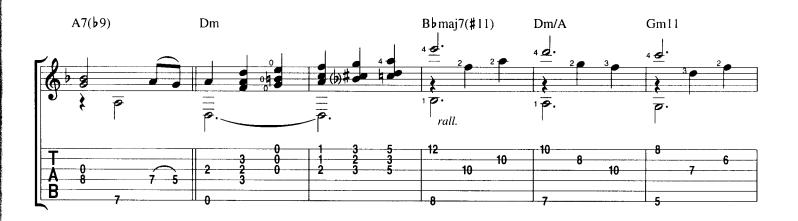


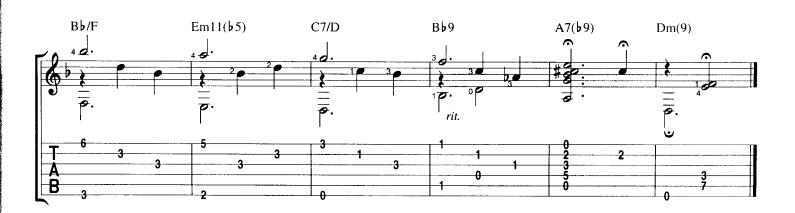












# A Selected Bill Evans Discography

Bill Evans' recorded output was tremendous. The following is only a partial list of his recordings as a leader. This does not include his many recordings as a sideman.

YEAR	ALBUM TITLE	RECORD LABEL
1956	Conception	Milestone
1956	New Jazz Conceptions	Original Jazz
1956	The Complete Riverside Recordings (1956–63)	Riverside
1958	Everybody Digs Bill Evans	Original Jazz
1958	Peace Piece and Other Pieces	Milestone
1959	On Green Dolphin Street	Milestone
1959	Portrait in Jazz	Original Jazz
1959	Spring Leaves	Milestone
1959	Undercurrent	Blue Note
1960	The 1960 Birdland Sessions [live]	Cool N' Blue
1961	Explorations	Original Jazz
1961	More From the Vanguard	Milestone
1961	Nirvana	Atlantic
1961	Sunday at the Village Vanguard [live]	Original Jazz
1961	Village Vanguard Sessions [live]	Milestone
1961	Waltz for Debbie	Original Jazz
1962	Compact Jazz: Bill Evans	Verve
1962	Empathy	Verve
1962	Empathy/A Simple Matter of Conviction	Verve
1962	How My Heart Sings!	Original Jazz
1962	Interplay Sessions	Original Jazz
1962	Moonbeams	Original Jazz
1963	Bill Evans Trio '64	Verve
1963	Bill Evans Trio at Shelly's Manne-Hole	Original Jazz
1963	Conversations With Myself	Verve
1963	The Solo Sessions, Vol. 1	Milestone
1963	The Solo Sessions, Vol. 2	Milestone
1963	Time Remembered	Milestone
1963	Trio '64	Verve
1964	The Best of Bill Evans Live on Verve	Verve
1964	Trio Live	Verve
1965	Bill Evans Trio '65	Verve
1965	Bill Evans Trio With Symphony Orchestra	Verve
1965	Paris (1965)	Royal Jazz
1965	Time to Remember (Live in Europe 1965–1972)	Natasha
1965	Trio '65	Verve
1966	A Simple Matter of Conviction	Verve
1966	Bill Evans at Town Hall	Verve
1966	Intermodulation	Verve
966	The Best of Bill Evans	Verve
.966	The Secret Sessions	Milestone
1967	Further Conversations With Myself	Verve
1968	Bill Evans at the Montreux Jazz Festival	Verve
1969	Alone	Verve
1969	You're Gonna Hear From Me	Milestone
1970	Montreaux, Vol. 2	CTI
1971	Bill Evans Album	Columbia

YEAR	ALBUM TITLE	RECORD LABEL
1972	Living Time	Columbia
1972	Yesterday I Heard the Rain	Bandstand
1973	From the Seventies	Fantasy
1973	The Complete Fantasy Recordings	Fantasy
1973	The Tokyo Concert [live]	Original Jazz
1974	Blue in Green	Milestone
1974	But Beautiful	Milestone
1974	Intuition	Original Jazz
1974	Live in Europe, Vol. 1	EPM
1974	Live in Europe, Vol. 2	EPM
1974	Re: Person I Knew	Original Jazz
1974	Since We Met	Original Jazz
1974	The Canadian Concert of Bill Evans [live]	Can-Am
1975	Alone (Again)	Fantasy
1975	Bill Evans and Monica Zetterlund	West Wind
1975	Eloquence	Fantasy
1975	Live in Switzerland (1975)	Jazz Helvet
1975	Montreaux, Vol. 3 [live]	Original Jazz
	The Tony Bennett/Bill Evans Album	Original Jazz
1975	Quintessence	Original Jazz
1976	~	Nelson
1976	Together Again Trio	Verve
1976		Original Jazz
1977	Cross-Currents Second Trio	Milestone
1977		Warner Bros.
1977	You Must Believe in Spring	Warner Bros.
1978	Affinity New Convergerions	Warner Bros.
1978	New Conversations	Original Jazz
1979	I Will Say Goodbye	Jazz Lab
1979	Live at the Balboa Jazz Club, Vol. 1	Jazz Lab Jazz Lab
1979	Live at the Balboa Jazz Club, Vol. 2	West Wind
1979	Live in Buenos Aires, 1979	
1979	Live in Buenos Aires, Vol. 2	Jazz Lab Elektra
1979	Paris Concert, Edition One [live]	Elektra
1979	Paris Concert, Edition Two [live]	Warner Bros.
1979	We Will Meet Again	
1980	Consecration, Vol. 1	Timeless
1980	Consecration, Vol. 2	Timeless
1980	The Brilliant	Timeless
1980	Turn Out the Stars	Dreyfus
1980	Turn Out the Stars: Final Village Vanguard	Warner Bros.
1992	Tribute	Avion
1993	Jazz 'Round Midnight	Verve
1994	Verve Jazz Masters 5: Bill Evans	Verve
1995	The Best of Verve	Verve
1997	The Complete Bill Evans on Verve	Verve
1998	Autumn Leaves [Giants of Jazz]	Giants of Jazz
1998	Ultimate Bill Evans	Polygram