

= Kind of Blue =

Kind of Blue is a studio album by American jazz musician Miles Davis , released on August 17 , 1959 , by Columbia Records . It was recorded earlier that year on March 2 and April 22 at Columbia 's 30th Street Studio in New York City . The recording sessions featured Davis 's ensemble sextet , consisting of pianist Bill Evans , drummer Jimmy Cobb , bassist Paul Chambers , and saxophonists John Coltrane and Julian " Cannonball " Adderley , together with pianist Wynton Kelly on one track .

After the entry of Evans into his sextet , Davis followed up on the modal experimentations of Milestones (1958) by basing Kind of Blue entirely on modality , in contrast to his earlier work with the hard bop style of jazz .

Though precise figures have been disputed , Kind of Blue has been described by many music writers not only as Davis 's best @-@ selling album , but as the best @-@ selling jazz record of all time . On October 7 , 2008 , it was certified quadruple platinum in sales by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) .

Kind of Blue has been regarded by many critics as jazz 's greatest record , Davis 's masterpiece , and one of the best albums of all time . Its influence on music , including jazz , rock , and classical genres , has led writers to also deem it one of the most influential albums ever recorded . Kind of Blue was one of fifty recordings chosen in 2002 by the Library of Congress to be added to the National Recording Registry , and in 2003 , it was ranked number 12 on Rolling Stone magazine 's list of the 500 greatest albums of all time .

= = Background = =

By late 1958 , Davis employed one of the most acclaimed and profitable working bands pursuing the hard bop style . His personnel had become stable : alto saxophonist Cannonball Adderley , tenor saxophonist John Coltrane , pianist Bill Evans , long @-@ serving bassist Paul Chambers , and drummer Jimmy Cobb . His band played a mixture of pop standards and bebop originals by Charlie Parker , Thelonious Monk , Dizzy Gillespie , and Tadd Dameron . As with all bebop @-@ based jazz , Davis 's groups improvised on the chord changes of a given song . Davis was one of many jazz musicians growing dissatisfied with bebop , and saw its increasingly complex chord changes as hindering creativity .

In 1953 , the pianist George Russell published his Lydian Chromatic Concept of Tonal Organization , which offered an alternative to the practice of improvisation based on chords and chord changes . Abandoning the traditional major and minor key relationships , the Lydian Chromatic Concept introduced the idea of chord / scale unity and was the first theory to explore the vertical relationship between chords and scales , as well as the only original theory to come from jazz . This approach led the way to " modal " in jazz . Influenced by Russell 's ideas , Davis implemented his first modal composition with the title track of his studio album Milestones (1958) . Satisfied with the results , Davis prepared an entire album based on modality . Pianist Bill Evans , who had studied with Russell but recently departed from Davis 's sextet to pursue his own career , was drafted back into the new recording project , the sessions that would become Kind of Blue .

= = Recording = =

Kind of Blue was recorded on three @-@ track tape in two sessions at Columbia Records ' 30th Street Studio in New York City . On March 2 , 1959 , the tracks " So What " , " Freddie Freeloader " , and " Blue in Green " were recorded for side one of the original LP , and on April 22 the tracks " All Blues " and " Flamenco Sketches " were recorded , making up side two . Production was handled by Teo Macero , who had produced Davis 's previous two LPs , and Irving Townsend .

As was Davis 's penchant , he called for almost no rehearsal and the musicians had little idea what they were to record . As described in the original liner notes by pianist Bill Evans , Davis had only given the band sketches of scales and melody lines on which to improvise . Once the musicians were assembled , Davis gave brief instructions for each piece and then set to taping the sextet in

studio . While the results were impressive with so little preparation , the persistent legend that the entire album was recorded in one pass is untrue . Only " Flamenco Sketches " yielded a complete take on the first try . That take , not the master , was issued in 1997 as a bonus alternate take . The five master takes issued , however , were the only other complete takes ; an insert for the ending to " Freddie Freeloader " was recorded , but was not used for release or on the issues of Kind of Blue prior to the 1997 reissue . Pianist Wynton Kelly may not have been happy to see the man he replaced , Bill Evans , back in his old seat . Perhaps to assuage the pianist 's feelings , Davis had Kelly play instead of Evans on the album 's most blues @-@ oriented number , " Freddie Freeloader " . The live album Miles Davis at Newport 1958 documents this band . However , the Newport Jazz Festival recording on July 3 , 1958 , reflects the band in its hard bop conception , the presence of Bill Evans only six weeks into his brief tenure in the Davis band notwithstanding , rather than the modal approach of Kind of Blue .

= = Composition = =

Kind of Blue is based entirely on modality in contrast to Davis 's earlier work with the hard bop style of jazz and its complex chord progression and improvisation . The entire album was composed as a series of modal sketches , in which each performer was given a set of scales that defined the parameters of their improvisation and style . This style was in contrast to more typical means of composing , such as providing musicians with a complete score or , as was more common for improvisational jazz , providing the musicians with a chord progression or series of harmonies .

Modal jazz of this type was not unique to this album . Davis himself had previously used the same method on his 1958 Milestones album , the ' 58 Sessions , and Porgy and Bess (1958) , on which he used modal influences for collaborator Gil Evans 's third stream compositions . Also , the original concept and method had been developed in 1953 by pianist and writer George Russell . Davis saw Russell 's methods of composition as a means of getting away from the dense chord @-@ laden compositions of his time , which Davis had labeled " thick . " Modal composition , with its reliance on scales and modes , represented , as Davis called it , " a return to melody . " In a 1958 interview with Nat Hentoff of The Jazz Review , Davis elaborated on this form of composition in contrast to the chord progression predominant in bebop , stating " No chords ... gives you a lot more freedom and space to hear things . When you go this way , you can go on forever . You don 't have to worry about changes and you can do more with the [melody] line . It becomes a challenge to see how melodically innovative you can be . When you 're based on chords , you know at the end of 32 bars that the chords have run out and there 's nothing to do but repeat what you 've just done ? with variations . I think a movement in jazz is beginning away from the conventional string of chords ... there will be fewer chords but infinite possibilities as to what to do with them . "

As noted by Bill Evans in the LP liner notes , " Miles conceived these settings only hours before the recording dates . " Evans continued with an introduction concerning the modes used in each composition on the album . " So What " consists of two modes : sixteen measures of the first , followed by eight measures of the second , and then eight again of the first . " Freddie Freeloader " is a standard twelve @-@ bar blues form . " Blue in Green " consists of a ten @-@ measure cycle following a short four @-@ measure introduction . " All Blues " is a twelve @-@ bar blues form in 6 / 8 time . " Flamenco Sketches " consists of five scales , which are each played " as long as the soloist wishes until he has completed the series " .

Liner notes list Davis as writer of all compositions , but many scholars and fans believe that Bill Evans wrote part or the whole of " Blue in Green " and " Flamenco Sketches " . Bill Evans assumed co @-@ credit with Davis for " Blue in Green " when recording it on his Portrait in Jazz album . The Davis estate acknowledged Evans ' authorship in 2002 . The practice of a band leader 's appropriating authorship of a song written by a sideman occurred frequently in the jazz world , as legendary saxophonist Charlie Parker did so to Davis when Parker took a songwriting credit for the tune " Donna Lee " , written by Davis while employed as a sideman in Charlie Parker 's quintet in the late 1940s . The composition later became a popular jazz standard . Another example is the introduction to " So What " , attributed to Gil Evans , which is closely based on the opening

measures of French composer Claude Debussy 's Voiles (1910) , the second prelude from his first collection of preludes .

= = Reception and legacy = =

Since its release in 1959 , Kind of Blue has been regarded by many critics as Davis 's greatest work ; it is his most acclaimed album , and has been cited as the best @-@ selling jazz record released , despite later claims attributing the achievement to Davis 's first official gold record Bitches Brew (1970) . Music writer Chris Morris cited Kind of Blue as " the distillation of Davis 's art . " Kind of Blue has also been noted as one of the most influential albums in the history of jazz . One reviewer has called it a " defining moment of twentieth century music . " Several of the songs from the album have become jazz standards . Kind of Blue is consistently ranked among the greatest albums of all time . In a review of the album , AllMusic senior editor Stephen Thomas Erlewine stated :

Kind of Blue isn 't merely an artistic highlight for Miles Davis , it 's an album that towers above its peers , a record generally considered as the definitive jazz album , a universally acknowledged standard of excellence . Why does Kind of Blue possess such a mystique ? Perhaps because this music never flaunts its genius It 's the pinnacle of modal jazz ? tonality and solos build from the overall key , not chord changes , giving the music a subtly shifting quality It may be a stretch to say that if you don 't like Kind of Blue , you don 't like jazz ? but it 's hard to imagine it as anything other than a cornerstone of any jazz collection .

In 1958 , however , the arrival of Ornette Coleman on the jazz scene via his fall residency at the Five Spot club , consolidated by the release of his The Shape of Jazz to Come LP in 1959 , muted the initial impact of Kind of Blue , a happenstance that irritated Davis greatly . Though Davis and Coleman both offered alternatives to the rigid rules of bebop , Davis would never reconcile himself to Coleman 's free jazz innovations , although he would incorporate musicians amenable to Coleman 's ideas with his great quintet of the mid @-@ 1960s , and offer his own version of " free " playing with his jazz fusion outfits in the 1970s . The influence of Kind of Blue did build , and all of the sidemen from the album went on to achieve success on their own . Evans formed his influential jazz trio with bassist Scott LaFaro and drummer Paul Motian ; " Cannonball " Adderley fronted popular bands with his brother Nat ; Kelly , Chambers and Cobb continued as a touring unit , recording under Kelly 's name as well as in support of Coltrane and Wes Montgomery , among others ; and Coltrane went on to become one of the most revered and innovative of all jazz musicians . Even more than Davis , Coltrane took the modal approach and ran with it during his career as a leader in the 1960s , leavening his music with Coleman 's ideas as the decade progressed .

According to Acclaimed Music , Kind of Blue is the 49th most ranked record on critics ' all @-@ time lists . In 1994 , the album was ranked number one in Colin Larkin 's Top 100 Jazz Albums . Larkin described it as " the greatest jazz album in the world " . It has been ranked at or near the top of numerous " best album " lists in disparate genres . In 2002 , Kind of Blue was one of 50 recordings chosen that year by the Library of Congress to be added to the National Recording Registry . In selecting the album as number 12 on its 2003 list of the 500 greatest albums of all time , Rolling Stone magazine stated : " This painterly masterpiece is one of the most important , influential and popular albums in jazz " . On December 16 , 2009 , the United States House of Representatives passed a resolution honoring the 50th anniversary of Kind of Blue and " reaffirming jazz as a national treasure " . It is included in the 2005 book 1001 Albums You Must Hear Before You Die , described by reviewer Seth Jacobson as " a genre @-@ defining moment in twentieth @-@ century music , period . "

= = Influence = = =

The album 's influence has reached beyond jazz , as musicians of such genres as rock and classical have been influenced by it , while critics have written about it as one of the most influential albums of all time . Many improvisatory rock musicians of the 1960s referred to Kind of Blue for inspiration , along with other Davis albums , as well as Coltrane 's modal records My Favorite Things

(1961) and A Love Supreme (1965) . Guitarist Duane Allman of the Allman Brothers Band said his soloing on songs such as " In Memory of Elizabeth Reed " " comes from Miles and Coltrane , and particularly Kind of Blue . I 've listened to that album so many times that for the past couple of years , I haven 't hardly listened to anything else . " Pink Floyd keyboardist Richard Wright said that the chord progressions on the album influenced the structure of the introductory chords to the song " Breathe " on their landmark opus The Dark Side of the Moon (1973) . In his book Kind of Blue : The Making of a Miles Davis Masterpiece , writer Ashley Kahn wrote " still acknowledged as the height of hip , four decades after it was recorded , Kind of Blue is the premier album of its era , jazz or otherwise . Its vapory piano introduction is universally recognized " . Producer Quincy Jones , one of Davis ' longtime friends , wrote : " That [Kind of Blue] will always be my music , man . I play Kind of Blue every day ? it 's my orange juice . It still sounds like it was made yesterday " . Pianist Chick Corea , one of Miles ' acolytes , was also struck by its majesty , later stating " It 's one thing to just play a tune , or play a program of music , but it 's another thing to practically create a new language of music , which is what Kind of Blue did . "

Gary Burton noted the consistent innovation present throughout the album , stating : " It wasn 't just one tune that was a breakthrough , it was the whole record . When new jazz styles come along , the first few attempts to do it are usually kind of shaky . Early Charlie Parker records were like this . But with Kind of Blue [the sextet] all sound like they ? re fully into it . " Along with the Dave Brubeck Quartet 's Time Out (1959) and Coltrane 's Giant Steps (1960) , Kind of Blue has often been recommended by music writers as an introductory jazz album , for similar reasons : the music on both records is very melodic , and the relaxed quality of the songs makes the improvisation easy for listeners to follow , without sacrificing artistry or experimentation . Upon the release of the 50th anniversary collector 's edition of the album , a columnist for All About Jazz stated " Kind of Blue heralded the arrival of a revolutionary new American music , a post @-@ bebop modal jazz structured around simple scales and melodic improvisation . Trumpeter / band leader / composer Miles Davis assembled a sextet of legendary players to create a sublime atmospheric masterpiece . Fifty years after its release , Kind of Blue continues to transport listeners to a realm all its own while inspiring musicians to create to new sounds ? from acoustic jazz to post @-@ modern ambient ? in every genre imaginable . " Later in an interview , renowned hip @-@ hop artist and rapper Q @-@ Tip reaffirmed the album 's reputation and influence when discussing the significance of Kind of Blue , stating " It 's like the Bible ? you just have one in your house . " The 2014 album Blue by Mostly Other People Do the Killing is a note @-@ for @-@ note reproduction of Kind of Blue .

The Kind of Blue musicians appeared together in further recorded ventures through the 1960s . Davis had made a rare post @-@ 1953 sideman appearance in 1958 on Adderley 's Somethin ' Else album ; Evans and Adderley collaborated on the latter 's LP Know What I Mean ? from 1961 . Kelly and Chambers backed Hank Mobley on Soul Station in 1960 , and Evans and Chambers played on the sessions for The Blues and the Abstract Truth by Oliver Nelson in 1961 . The rhythm section of Kelly , Chambers , and Cobb backed Coltrane for Coltrane Jazz and one track on his landmark Giant Steps , which featured Chambers throughout . That trio stayed with Davis for the recordings Someday My Prince Will Come and the live sets at the Blackhawk and at Carnegie Hall .

= = = Davis in retrospect = = =

Late in his life , from the electric period on , Davis repeatedly disregarded his earlier work , such as the music of Birth of the Cool or Kind of Blue . In Davis ' view , remaining static stylistically was the wrong option .

" So What " or Kind of Blue , they were done in that era , the right hour , the right day , and it happened . It 's over [...] . What I used to play with Bill Evans , all those different modes , and substitute chords , we had the energy then and we liked it . But I have no feel for it anymore ? it 's more like warmed @-@ over turkey .

When Shirley Horn insisted , in 1990 , that Davis reconsider playing the gentle ballads and modal tunes of his Kind of Blue period , he demurred : " Nah , it hurts my lip . "

= = Track listing = =

= = Personnel = =

= = = Musicians = = =

Per the liner notes

Miles Davis ? trumpet

Julian " Cannonball " Adderley ? alto saxophone (except on " Blue in Green ")

John Coltrane ? tenor saxophone

Bill Evans ? piano (except on " Freddie Freeloader ")

Wynton Kelly ? piano (on " Freddie Freeloader ")

Paul Chambers ? double bass

Jimmy Cobb ? drums

= = = Production = = =

Irving Townsend ? producer

Fred Plaut ? engineering

Don Hunstein ? photography

Bill Evans ? original liner notes

Michael Cuscuna ? reissue production

Mark Wilder ? remix engineering

Jay Maisel ? 2009 reissue booklet photography

Nat Hentoff ? 1997 reissue liner notes

Francis Davis ? 2009 reissue liner notes

= = Charts = =

Billboard Music Charts (North America)

1977 : Jazz Albums ? No. 37

1987 : Top Jazz Albums ? No. 10

2001 : Top Internet Albums ? No. 14

= = Certifications = =

= = Release history = =

Kind of Blue was originally released as a 12 @-@ inch vinyl record , in both stereo and mono . There have been several reissues of Kind of Blue , including additional printings throughout the vinyl era . On some editions , the label switched the order for the two tracks on side two , " All Blues " and " Flamenco Sketches " . The record has been remastered many times during the compact disc era , including the 1986 Columbia Jazz Masterpieces reissue and , most notably , the 1992 remastering that corrected the speed for side one , which had been issued slightly off @-@ pitch originally , and the 1997 issue that added the alternative take of " Flamenco Sketches " . In 2005 , a DualDisc release included the original album , a digital remastering in 5 @.@ 1 Surround Sound and LPCM Stereo , and a 25 @-@ minute documentary Made in Heaven about the making and influence of Kind of Blue . Kind of Blue has also been re @-@ released on a rare 24 @-@ carat gold CD collectors version .

The album was also released on many other formats , many of which are only to be found second

hand .

Two @-@ track open @-@ reel tape (US only) , Columbia GCB 60 , from which " Freddie Freeloader " and " Flamenco Sketches " were omitted to keep cost down . This release was on the market less than a year and was discontinued some time after July 1961 , after Sketches of Spain had been released as four @-@ track only . Sonically most often better than the four @-@ track counterpart that replaced it . The reports that the two @-@ track version was the only one to be issued at correct speed for the tracks off the first album side are false . None issued were at the correct speed .

Four @-@ track open @-@ reel tape (US only) , Columbia CQ 379 , as the complete five @-@ track album . This release replaced the two @-@ track release and remained in the Columbia catalog for a few years . Some tracks are available on other reel tapes issued current at the time of or following the original release of the album , as by Various Artists . None issued were at the correct speed . " All Blues " is included on the Greatest Hits album .

Armed Forces Radio and Television Service 16 @-@ inch transcription discs . Note these are monophonic and the tune on side P @-@ 6925 marked " Flamenco Sketches " actually holds " All Blues " . None issued were at the correct speed .

Philips Compact Cassette . Both as the original album prior to the Jazz Masterpiece remaster , and as the 1987 Jazz Masterpiece remaster . Neither are at the correct speed .

MiniDisc , Columbia CM 40579 (US) . Only as the master prior to 1997 , but not as the Jazz Masterpiece remaster . This was unavailable by the end of the 1990s when production of Jazz Masterpiece series had ceased . None issued were at the correct speed .

Two @-@ disc box set " 50th Anniversary Collector 's Edition " , released on September 30 , 2008 , by Columbia and Legacy .