

New York Trio – Love You Madly (2003)

Written by bluesever
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1 *Star Crossed Lovers* 4:27 2 *Jump For Joy* 4:41 3 *In A Sentimental Mood* 5:52 4 *Love You Madly* 8:16 5 *Sophisticated Lady* 4:53 6 *I'm Just A Lucky So-And-So* 6:43 7 *Prelude To A Kiss* 6:13 8 *It Don't Mean A Thing* 3:50 9 *C Jam Blues* 4:31 10 *I Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart* 7:11 11 *Warm Valley* 5:39 Bass – Jay Leonhart Drums – Bill Stewart Piano – Bill Charlap

The vast Duke Ellington songbook is always ripe for exploration, and the New York Trio, featuring pianist Bill Charlap, bassist Jay Leonhart, and drummer Bill Stewart, is up to the task. The gorgeous ballad "The Star Crossed Lovers" is in good hands, as Charlap gently examines the facets of this gem, accompanied by Leonhart's spacious basslines and Stewart's whispering brushes. The brisk run through "Love You Madly" is transformed into an extended workout instead of the brief versions typically played by its composer. Charlap's bluesy gospel introduction to "I'm Just a Lucky So-and-So" will turn a few heads. Even though there's nothing new about tackling "It Don't Mean a Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)" at a racehorse tempo, this trio's intricate workout is a bit more abstract than most recordings. Charlap's jaunty treatment of "I Let a Song Go Out of My Heart" suggests its composer's stride piano roots. ---Ken Dryden, AllMusic Review

This bouquet of Ellingtonia is superb, but then you'd expect nothing less from this top-level trio. Bill Charlap, increasingly acknowledged as one of the best living pianists in jazz, has a unique touch; when he plays a ballad, as on "Sentimental Mood," he presses the keys so softly that the notes seem breathed, rather than struck. His swinging is crisp, his runs light and flawless, and he has a knack for finding the heart of a song – a talent shared by bassist Jay Leonhart, who conveys maximum meaning with his harmonic choices. Leonhart, also known for his droll

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songwriting, can convey this wry sensibility with his playing, especially with his sly use of the slide. Drummer Bill Stewart, whose profile isn't as high as the others (yet), does a fine and nuanced job throughout.

Highlights are hard to pick when a recording is this consistent, but I'd choose the aforementioned "Sentimental Mood," the very cool "C-Jam Blues," and the title track, with its swinging solos and trades and impish sense of fun. All told, a sparkling and stylish release. ---Dr. Judith Schlesinger, allaboutjazz.com

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